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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XVIII, Issue No. 82

SATURDAY MARCH 22, 2008

www.saipantribune.com 50¢



OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Have you already signed the petition supporting the construction of a football field complex on Saipan?

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to cast your vote.

INSIDE



State Snoops

Two State Department employees are fired for inappropriately looking at Sen. Barack Obama's passport file.

NATION...Page 10



Rice Shortage

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has approved a P1.5-billion to increase rice production.

MAHARLIKA...Page 12



Make a Kite

Stability, agility, strength, color—all are qualities that make for a winning kite.

YOUNGSTYLE...Page 17

No LPG price hike so far—supplier. **PAGE 2**
Haze is not from Anatahan, says EMO. **PAGE 4**

Hundreds brave rain in Tapochau trek

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

Hundreds of Catholic devotees braved the heavy rain yesterday morning to climb Mt. Tapochau as part of a Good Friday tradition that has been practiced on Saipan for over 31 years now.

Scores of people began trekking up Saipan's highest peak as early as 2am and the numbers just kept going up as the day wore on, culminating with the carrying of a giant cross from the foot of Mt. Tapochau to the top. The cross was first blessed at Mt. Carmel Church before being brought to the foot of the mountain.

See **HUNDREDS** on Page 4



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

As early as 2am yesterday, the island's Catholic devotees began arriving at the peak of Mt. Tapochau to offer prayers at the foot of the statue of Christ, in observance of the annual Good Friday tradition.

Tibetans break silence

By CARA ANNA
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

TONGREN, China (AP)—A Tibetan monk crouched in the quiet courtyard of a nearly deserted monastery and bitterly recalled the words he and his

fellow monks have been forced to recite every year at government-organized classes: "I love this country."

The "patriotic education classes" have been imposed on the monks for the past decade, See **TIBETANS** on Page 4



AP

Young Tibetan monks carry empty water buckets through the almost deserted Gedan Song Zan Monastery at Zhongdian, in China's south-west Yunnan province Friday March 21, 2008.

'Not enough progress at NMC'

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges has informed the Northern Marianas College that the panel has not found "adequate progress" in a number of areas relating to the col-

lege's operations.

In a recent letter to the college, the ACCJC noted that, although issues relating to the college's School of Education appear ameliorated, a number of the college's areas still need work in order to meet accreditation standards.

The areas included administrative leadership, vision

planning and prioritizing; improved delivery of instructional programs to Tinian and Rota; training for the governing board; systematic program review; institution-wide engagement in assessment of student learning and program review; implementation of employee evaluation processes;

See **NOT** on Page 4

Boat pilot in human smuggling try pleads guilty

The pilot of a boat that got stranded 20 nautical miles northwest of Guam in an attempt to unlawfully enter Guam last year has entered a guilty plea.

Edwin Fariola Blanilla, 45, pleaded guilty to one count of smuggling a person from the Commonwealth to the U.S. for commercial advantage or financial gain.

Superior Court Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona accepted Blanilla's plea and sentenced him to five years in prison, all suspended except for eight months and 20 days.

Following the plea agreement, Manglona gave the defendant credit for the time he had already served from June 29, 2007 through March 19, 2008.

Because of this, Blanilla was released from the Department of Corrections on Wednesday.

Blanilla was placed on five years of unsupervised probation and required to pay a \$100 court assessment fee.

Manglona ordered the defendant to depart the CNMI immediately upon receipt of his repa-

See **BOAT** on Page 4

Local

No LPG price hike so far—supplier

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

While gas prices have gone up, all is silent in the liquefied petroleum gas front—at least for now.

Saipan Industrial Gas president Diony Lopez said that his company has so far not scheduled any price increases and is crossing its fingers that no hikes would be announced by the industry in the near future.

"No increase yet. I hope that by the first week of April, the price of fuel will go down, so we don't have to raise our prices," Lopez said in an interview with the *Saipan Tribune*, sounding optimistic as oil prices in the world market began to go down from the high \$110-mark per barrel at the start of the week.

However, Lopez said that because of the late February and March increase in fuel costs, Saipan Industrial Gas won't be able to go ahead with its planned rollback of prices.

Early last month, Lopez announced that the Puerto Rico-based company's LPG products



UP THE MOUNTAIN

As a form of penance, a group of men carry the wooden cross during the procession toward the peak of Mt. Tapochau on Good Friday morning.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

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Sunday SPECIAL LUNCH Beef Sauttee with Soup or Salad (Clam Chowder Soup, Tossed Green Salad) with FREE Ice Tea (No refill) ONLY \$6.00 BENTO Beef Sauttee, Fried Chicken, Sweet & Sour Shrimp, Potato Salad ONLY \$7.00		



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would decrease by 1 percent per lb. due to its main supplier in Guam, Shell North Pacific (Shell Guam Inc.), slashing the prices of its LPG products.

In related news, Lopez reported that Saipan Industrial Gas' stocks are always full.

"We have a lot of inventory. We always fill up our inventory. All our tanks are full. So that in case of emergency, delay, whatever it is, we will not run out," he said.

Lopez also revealed that the company recently enjoyed a rise in its market share on Saipan.

"Market share I think has increased a little. Our com-

petitor is bigger because of their bulk customers but I believe we are more profitable because we are bigger in the cylinder business."

Saipan Industrial Gas did not disclose how much its LPG products currently retail per lb.

Operating in the CNMI since 1985, Saipan Industrial Gas is located in Puerto Rico, Saipan, and sells LPG products both to commercial and residential customers.

Lower Base-headquartered Wushin Corp. was contacted by the *Saipan Tribune* about future prices hikes, but e-mails were not returned as of press time.

Norita reinstates boat patrol

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Department of Public Safety acting Commissioner Claudio K. Norita has directed the Boating Safety Unit to dispatch its patrol boat for the safety of fishermen and beachgoers on weekends, particularly today's Black Saturday and tomorrow's Easter Sunday.

With lots of picnics at CNMI beaches expected during Black Saturday and Easter Sunday, Norita also advised families to designate a "sober observer" to watch their children who are in the water.

With respect to boating safety measures, Norita said it was his policy before he left DPS that patrol boats go out into the water to conduct marine enforce-

ment during weekends.

"So the patrol boat has to get out. And again we are going to reinstate that. The patrol boat has to get out because on Saturdays and Sundays, fishermen go out, boaters go out, they go to Managaha," he said.

Boating Safety Unit officers, the commissioner stressed, need to go out and enforce the safety issues that are required of any boater.

Norita said traffic and patrol officers may also conduct patrols at beaches.

To avoid drowning incidents, Norita said, "We need to designate a sober observer to be out there and look out for the kids that are in the water. Because two seconds or one minute can make a lot of difference in a little child."

Group wants flat rate of \$0.25 for CUC

A local advocacy group is proposing a new flat rate for utilities at \$0.25 cents per kWh for the first 1,999.9 kWh usage, with no additional surcharges and all other "justifiable" charges included if consumer exceeds usage.

Taotao Tano CNMI Inc. made the proposal last week in reaction to a statement made by House Speaker Arnold Palacios in a Tuesday interview with KSPN 2, where the Saipan lawmaker allegedly blamed the

Senate for the problems now besetting the government-run Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

"Your statement last night [March 18]...was an understatement and inappropriate," said Taotao Tano president Greg Cruz. "The Senate amendments were based on actual findings provided by Taotao Tano, in which CUC was not truthful concerning their operational and financial crises. Amendments were also based

on the reality that residential consumers were subsidizing CUC operations such as fuel supplies to Tinian Power Plant (Telesource), and Power Plant 4 (Puerto Rico) contracts, including the fact that consumers were shouldering revenue losses such as consumers/garment factories that packed up and left without paying their utility bills."

He said on top of that, the government was making late payments due to a 2004 Tem-

porary Restraining Order filed by then Secretary of Finance Fermin Atalig, who had disputed the water and sewer billings of CUC.

That settlement ended with a \$94,000 monthly installment payment to CUC in which payments eventually became delinquent, to include current government billing in the millions, according to Cruz.

"Upon our investigation we uncovered that the TRO was still in place last year—July 2007—regardless of whether the settlement was satisfied, in which we lobbied the lifting of the TRO, eventually lifted by the court in August 2007," he said.

Cruz expressed himself puzzled over Palacios' motives in questioning the passage of Public Law 15-94. "I do not understand why you are blaming the Senate members for amending your bill and stating that such amendments are the reasons CUC is in deeper crisis. You should be applauding and commending the upper house for a job well done. At least they based their decisions on actual and true findings that the people have suffered enough and they were sincere about it."

If the Senate's amendments were the true cause of CUC's current crisis, Cruz said, why then was Palacios the first one to raise his hand to be recognized by then Speaker Oscar Babauta,

who reminded his colleagues at the lower chamber to be mindful of the governor's veto.

"On Oct. 3, 2007 majority of the House overrode the governor's veto a month before the election, stating that you and your colleagues had already identified CUC's \$7-8 million shortfall outside the general fund, to include that you were mindful of the governor's mes-

sage. In any case, if you and your colleagues plan on repealing Public Law 15-94 (H.B. 15-246) we would like to submit our proposal."

Currently the rate structure at CUC is 17.6 cents for kWh for the first 1,000 kWh, with no additional surcharges until the second 1,000 kWh. All other charges are included if the consumer exceeds usage. *(Mark Rabago)*



PAC 6 WORKSHOP

June Quitugua, PAC6 Project coordinator from the University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service; Michael Burdge, technical assistance specialist, University of Kentucky, Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment; and Suzanne Lizama, CNMI PSS acting Special Education coordinator, take a short break for a photo during the PAC6 workshop on "Implementing the stepwise process for accessing the general curriculum" at the Charley's Cabaret of the Pacific Islands Club Thursday.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Alleged 'ice' supplier on Tinian admits charges

A man tagged by authorities as one of the suppliers of crystal methamphetamine or "ice" on Tinian has pleaded guilty.

Zhan Dong Guo, 47, pleaded guilty to three counts of distribution of a controlled substance.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson accepted Guo's plea and ordered the U.S. Probation Office to submit to the court a pre-sentence investigation report on or before May 20, 2008.

Munson set the sentencing for June 24, 2008 at 9am.

The judge remanded Guo into

police custody.

According to the complaint filed by assistant U.S. attorney Craig Moore, Guo distributed "ice" on Jan. 9 and 10, 2008.

A Drug Enforcement Administration special agent stated in his report that on Jan. 9, detectives from the Department of Public Safety debriefed a confidential source regarding "ice" traffickers on Tinian.

The source informed the agents that a certain Tony was distributing "ice" at the Pacific Laundry in San Jose, Tinian. Authorities later identified Tony as defendant Guo.

The same day, the police source and another undercover agent managed to buy \$250 worth of "ice" from Guo in the parking lot of J. J. Mart.

The following day, Jan. 10, the same source and undercover agent purchased a total of \$400 worth of "ice" from Guo in two separate transactions inside a room at Pacific Laundry.

The surveillance officers then entered the Pacific Laundry during the second transaction but the defendant allegedly struggled briefly before being overpowered. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

following awards:

1. Best in Costume
2. Best Easter Basket
3. Best Easter Egg Hunters
4. Golden Egg Hunt Winner
5. Consolation prizes and more

Easter Brunch ends at 2pm.

A shuttle bus will be provided from and to the American Memorial Park and it will run every 30 minutes from 9:30am to 2:30 pm.

■ 9:30am FIRST TRIP 9:50 am

■ 10:00 am 10:20 am

■ 10:30 am 10:50 am

■ 11:00 am 11:20 am

■ BREAK

■ 1:00 pm 1:20 pm

■ 1:30 pm 1:50 pm

■ 2:00 pm LAST TRIP

Disclaimer: The Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan is an affiliate company of the Saipan Tribune.

Fiesta to host biggest Egg Hunt Party, Easter Brunch

The Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan will be hosting tomorrow, March 23, what it dubs as "The Biggest Egg Hunt Party and Easter Brunch" on the island.

One of the major attractions in tomorrow's event is the Live Animal Display at the Hibiscus Garden. Guests and their families may have their pictures taken with the animals from 10 am to 2pm.

Registration for the half-day event begins at 9:45 at the Mai Restaurant's entrance.

"Please bring your Easter basket and get your door prize," said Oscar Yema, the hotel's events manager.

Brunch will be held at the Hibiscus Hall and doors will open at 10am.

"Enjoy the live music of the Zynergy Band and the Saipan Singing Superstar Kids Champions," said Yema. "Your reservation must be in Hibiscus to be able to go inside the hall."

Doors open at the Bund and Mai for brunch at 11am. The same food will be available at all three venues: Hibiscus Hall, The Bund and Mai.

Seating arrangement will be based on prior reservations.

There will be a Magic Show for the children at the Azucena Room at 11:30am, followed by electronic games.

The official Egg Hunt begins at 12:30pm. All children will gather at the South Pool Side Pavilion to start the fun.

The awarding will be done inside the Hibiscus Hall for the

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11:00am – 2:00pm • 5:30pm – 10:00pm
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A sumptuous Pre-Opening lunch is available this Saturday, March 22, 2008 from 11:00am to 2:00pm with the following menu:

Sirloin Steak 10oz.....	\$19.00
Beef Stroganoff	15.00
Hamburger Steak with Cheese Penne....	12.00
Chicken Diavola.....	10.00
Japanese Style Chicken Curry.....	9.50
Mahi-Mahi Meuniere.....	9.50
Hamburger 8oz.....	8.50
Cheese Hamburger.....	8.75
Arrabiata Spaghetti.....	9.50

Above menu is served either with Salad, Bread or Rice

Located at the first floor of the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe

Haze is not from Anatahan, says EMO

The haze present on the islands yesterday was not due to vog from the active Anatahan Volcano, according to the CNMI Emergency Management Office.

In a public advisory issued late afternoon, EMO sought to allay concerns about the haze, saying that the hazy weather condition is not related to the volcano of Anatahan since the wind direction is from south-southwest heading northeast and wind speed is light and variable.

It did not say, however, where the haze is coming from.

"Visible satellite imagery suggests the haze will not be quite as thick as yesterday...although a temperature inversion in the lower atmosphere will help concentrate the haze by trapping it closer to the ground," EMO said. "Winds are expected to continue bringing haze into the Marianas today but the winds are expected to shift toward the east later today and tonight, allowing the haze to diminish."

ing the haze to diminish."

EMO advised residents with respiratory ailments to avoid venturing outdoors for long periods until conditions improve.

The public is urged to continue to tune in to local radio broadcast or local news sources and log in at www.cnmiemo.gov.mp on the Internet for any future development on Anatahan Volcano or any other statements and advisories. **(EMO)**

HUNDREDS

From Page 1

It took at least 40 brave men to carry the huge wooden cross up Mt. Tapochau and pitch it in place on a rocky mound. The moment the cross was finally in place, the heavens opened up with a heavy shower of rain.

A brief ceremony was then held, where Catholic volunteers read excerpts of the Passion of Christ, while some sang holy rosary songs on their hike up.

Participants in yesterday Good Friday trek came from all walks of life: men, women, and children, Chamorros, Carolinians, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and Bangladeshis, just to name a few.

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, who also joined the trek, said he has been hiking up the mountain every year since he was a little boy.

"I've been doing this for as long as I can remember. It's a tradition that I hope to follow for a very long time," Tudela said.

Tudela, despite fuel problems at his office, had his men prepare the road leading up the mountain for yesterday's trek.

For some, Good Friday is a day of reconciliation and celebration.

According to Saipan resident Joy Jalipa, she said that yesterday was the very first time she has ever hiked up the mountain. "It's my very first time up here and it's the perfect time to pray for my sins and ask for forgiveness," Jalipa said.

Sabina Camacho, a mother of two, said that Good Friday allows her to look back and appreciate all the things she has in life.

"My family, and especially my children, is [sic] what I am most thankful for," she said.

The observance was also a reason for families and friends to strengthen their relationship and faith in God and with one another, especially during Lent.

Government and community groups manned several booths alongside the pathway, providing free beverages and lights snacks for the trekkers' journey up the hill.

As a part of the Lenten observance of Good Friday, a wooden cross now sits atop the Mt. Tapochau to remember the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ.



Catholic devotees congregate at the foot of the statue of Christ on the peak of Mt. Tapochau in observance of the annual tradition of Good Friday. JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

NOT

From Page 1

and renovation or replacement of aging facilities.

The School of Education also needs to address its isolation from the rest of the college and improve its relationship with the local public schools, ACCJC said.

The Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities has resolved to continue the accreditation of the four-year program in elementary education, but the ACSCU relies on the underlying institutional accreditation from the ACCJC.

The *Saipan Tribune* tried to obtain comments from NMC president Carmen Fernandez yesterday but she did not answer her cell phone.

NMC's Board of Regents has declared a state of exigency at the college during its last board meeting and has decided to meet consecutively every month in an effort to focus on overcoming its downgraded status.

The declaration of the state of exigency would require the college to do everything in its power to address concerns raised by the Western Association of Schools & Colleges, the umbrella group for both the ACSCU and ACCJC.

In a report prepared for the AC-

CJC, the WASC said that the college should include an appendix or section describing any further changes or progress with respect to the School of Education, especially in relation to the issues that were reviewed in the most recent visit to the School of Education.

The CNMI's only institution for higher learning was placed on show-cause status in January 2008. The college has up to October 2008 to come up with reasons why it should retain its accreditation. In January 2009, the accrediting commission will render their decision whether the college should continue to operate or close it down.

BOAT

From Page 1

triation airline ticket.

Blanilla, a Filipino, will not be allowed to return to the CNMI.

The judge said the defendant should surrender any ownership interest, if any, on the boat that he used for the smuggling attempt. He was directed to turn over the vessel to the CNMI government.

The pilot, Blanilla, was supposed to drop off 11 Chinese nationals in the waters near Guam so they could enter the territory in June 2007. In exchange, he was to receive the boat as payment.

Immigration inspector Erwin Flores stated in court papers that the 11 Chinese nationals on board the boat had no passports in their possession, nor did they have any type of visa authorizing them to enter Guam.

Flores said that Blanilla planned to sell the boat and then return to the Phil-

ippines.

It was Blanilla who called authorities for assistance when the boat got disabled near Rota.

Last month, Manglona imposed a 19-day prison term on one of the 11 passengers for improper entry into the U.S.

The defendant, Yanong Lin Doone, was given 19 days credit for the time she had already served in prison. She was ordered to leave the CNMI at her own expense, among other conditions. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**

TIBETANS

From Page 1

but the young monk in the centuries-old Rongwo monastery still can speak his own mind to a journalist.

"We want freedom," he said. "We want the Dalai Lama to come back to his land."

The monastery is located in the valley town of Tongren, in Qinghai province, about 600 miles north of Lhasa, where anti-government protests last week were put down by riot police. The town is a mix of Tibetans and ethnic Chinese.

Just inside the monastery's main entrance, Tibetan pilgrims walked in quick circles around a prayer room that displays, among sacred objects, a large photo of the Dalai Lama. Outside, unmarked police vans were parked in a vast gravel lot.

The abbot of the monastery ordered the monks not to protest, saying that joining the Tibetan uprising would only hurt them.

When asked whether he agreed, a tortured expression crossed the face of the young monk, and he pressed a thumb to his lips in thought. Finally he said: "If I don't agree, there is nothing I can do."

The monk, like many other residents of this region, was fearful of giving his name to a foreign journalist.

His friend, another monk, spoke only Tibetan and communicated by bringing journalists into his cramped bedroom, where he pointed to a large color photo of the Dalai Lama taped to a wall.

What the monks wouldn't say, a Buddhist nun from Taiwan would.

"There is no religious freedom here," said Shi Chuan, who had spent the past month visiting the monks in Rongwo. "They have no way to express themselves. It's like they have their hands tied."

She said police treated her aggressively until they realized she was a foreigner.

Caught between their abbot's orders and their desire to join other Tibetans in protest, about 100 monks climbed a hillside above the monastery on March 16. There they burned incense and set off fireworks, while riot police massed outside the more than 700-year-old monastery, businesses closed and Tibetans ducked indoors. The night was peaceful, though.

In the morning, shops opened as normal and children walked to school past groups of armed police taking their morning jog down the main streets. Dozens of riot police lounged in a hotel lobby at breakfast before going out to patrol, passing strolling Tibetans in traditional dress. The monastery remained quiet.

The Chinese government has scrambled to shut down China's Tibetan areas since the unrest in Lhasa. Authorities have shipped in truckloads of armed police, set up blockades to keep out foreigners and turned Tibetan communities across remote western China into armed camps, with the monasteries at their center.

■■■

Just outside the rings of riot police, life appears to go on as usual, at least at first glance. But Tibetans and non-Tibetans alike quietly share news of the uprising. One taxi driver furtively showed off cell phone photos his family had sent him from the protest in Lhasa.

In the heavily Tibetan southeastern corner of Qinghai province, tucked among at least three regions of reported protests, Tibetans in thick coats bounced by on motorcycles over gravel-strewn roads, waving. They huddled in cafes over plates piled with dumplings, their sunburned faces creasing when they smiled.

The dry, rolling grasslands more than 1,000 miles from Beijing gave the feeling of calm.

But a couple of hours down the road, several cars filled with police burst out of the darkness when a group of foreign journalists set off to walk around a checkpoint in one of the most heated areas of the Tibetan uprising, southern Gansu province.

"What did you see?" the officers angrily shouted. One officer did not put away his automatic rifle until the one ethnic Chinese journalist convinced him that he was a foreigner.

The lights of Luqu, a monastery town where there had been protests, were clearly visible down the road. The journalists were pushed into a police van and driven out of the Tibetan prefecture through its capital, where squads of riot police marched through the city square and hundreds more lined the empty streets.

The journalists were taken to a city outside the Tibetan region. When they stopped at the same checkpoint two of them had been escorted past less than 36 hours before, one young Chinese official smiled and said in English, "Ah, old friends."

■■■

In one town along the eastern edge of the Tibetan plateau, where snow fell from the gray sky and yaks grazed near frozen streams, a police checkpoint had been set up on one lonely road heading south from Tongren. Such checkpoints are common since the current Tibetan uprising began, and the mood was tense.

The driver was stopped, inspected and lightly punished—with a 30-minute stop beside the road. His passengers—foreign journalists—crouched in the back seat with jackets over their heads.

The officers weren't checking passports; they were checking to see if the driver had his seat belt buckled.

■■■

Between the periods of being controlled by the Chinese government and then largely ignored, Tibetans have learned to keep their frustrations on simmer. Drivers taped photos of important Buddhist lamas to the inside roofs of their cars. One driver proudly showed off a tiny glass ornament hanging from his rearview mirror with a faint engraved image of the Dalai Lama, a banned icon in China.

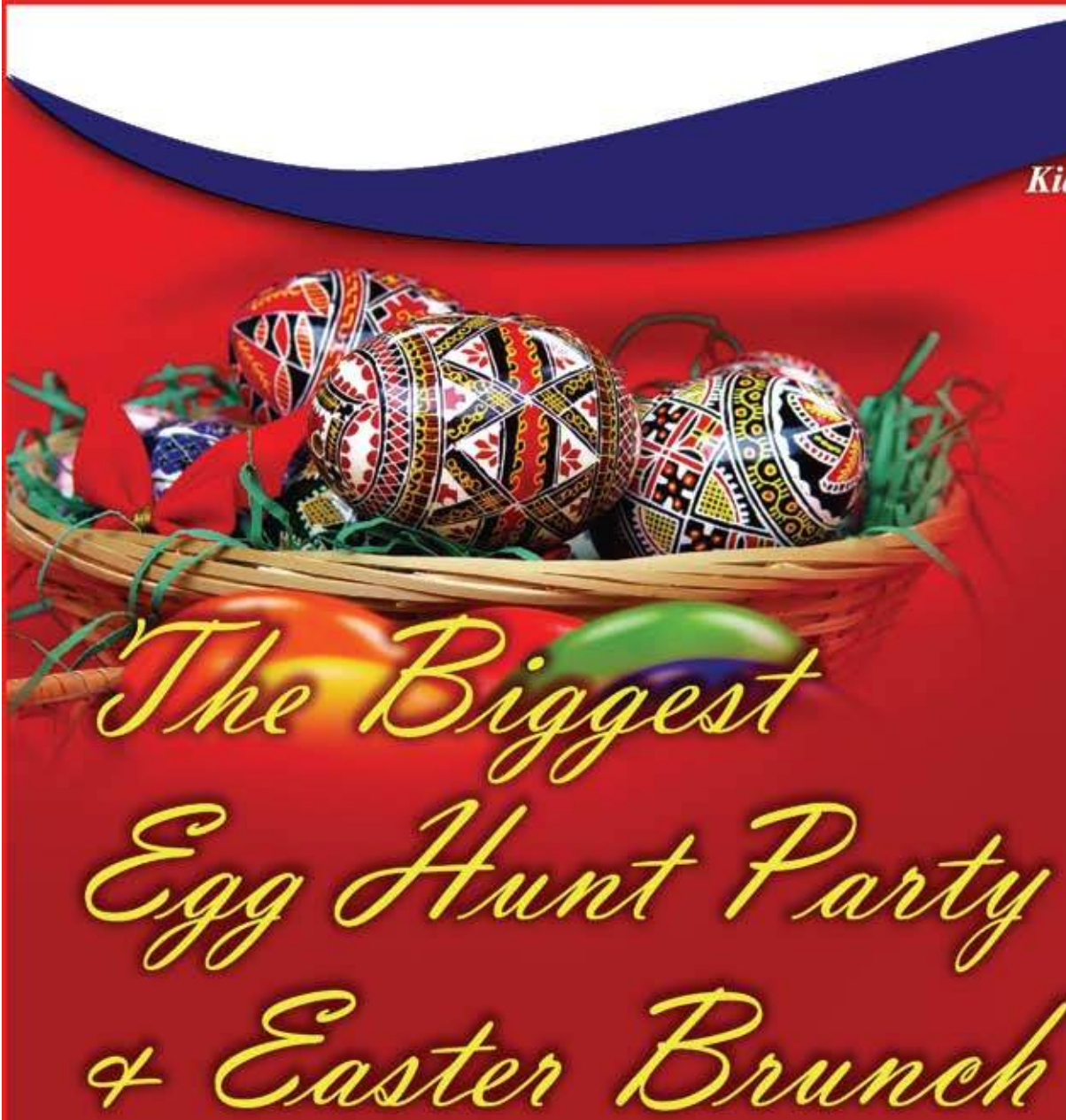
One taxi driver in a largely Muslim city in neighboring Gansu province showed off cell phone photos that his relatives in Lhasa had sent him.

The driver nervously clicked through images of charred and overturned cars and people running through the smoky streets, and he worried that local police might see him showing the images to a foreigner.

"Those Tibetans are causing a lot of trouble," the driver, a Muslim, said as he drove slowly at dusk through a once-bustling Tibetan area of town, now silent.

Despite the government's efforts to clamp down on news reports and cast the uprising as being caused by a tiny "Dalai clique," he knew exactly why the violence had occurred.

"They want freedom," he said.



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Volume XVIII, Issue No. 82Published daily at 2/F CIC Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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EDITORIAL

A new Pakistan

Pakistan is on the verge of taking a major step toward consolidating a centrist, secular democracy—the best antidote to the Islamist extremism threatening the country. The crucial remaining question is whether President Pervez Musharraf, and his allies in the Bush administration, will allow it to happen.

The potential breakthrough comes in the agreement of the two largest political parties, the Pakistan People's Party and the Muslim League, to form a coalition government that will hold a commanding majority in the Parliament elected last month. People's Party leader Asif Ali Zadari, the widower of assassinated former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and Muslim League chief Nawaz Sharif, also a former prime minister, agreed to implement a Charter for Democracy that Ms. Bhutto and Mr. Sharif hammered out in 2006 while they were living in exile. They plan to reform the constitution to eliminate autocratic powers accumulated by Mr. Musharraf following his 1999 coup against a democratic government, including the right to name commanders of the armed forces.

Even more important, the new government plans to restore the 63 senior judges—including members of the Supreme Court—illegally fired by Mr. Musharraf in November in a second coup intended to ensure himself another term as president. The defense of the dismissed judges, some of whom are still under house arrest, and the larger cause of building a genuinely independent judiciary have become the country's most popular political movement. When they are restored to the bench and controls imposed by Mr. Musharraf on the media are removed, Pakistan could have the most liberal and open political system in its history. That is the long-term solution to the assault on the country by the Taliban, al-Qaida and other Islamist fanatics, who so far this year have carried out 16 suicide bombings and killed more than 500 people—making Pakistan almost as violent as Iraq.

The last obstacle is Mr. Musharraf himself, who has clung to the office of president despite the overwhelming repudiation of his party in last month's elections. Retired from the army, Mr. Musharraf has one last base of support in the Bush administration, which stubbornly continues to back him. Fearful of what a restored Supreme Court might rule about his clearly illegitimate presidential mandate, the president is still trying to strike a deal to remain in office. If he doesn't get his way, he could refuse to recognize Parliament's authority or try to dissolve it after it convenes this week.

In short, only the personal ambitions of Mr. Musharraf, and the Bush administration's support for them, threaten to disrupt the establishment of a more democratic Pakistan. President Bush, who claims to believe that the replacement of autocrats with secular democratic governments is a key U.S. interest, should act on his own principle. He should tell Mr. Musharraf either to accept the decisions of the new government and courts, or step down.

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A surge in Iraq punditry

With the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq upon us, it seems to be generally agreed by most experts that the “surge” is working, that despite continuing casualties, we have at last reached a “turning point.” This is certainly the view of George W. (“Mission accomplished!”) Bush, Donald (“Stuff happens”) Rumsfeld, Dick (“The streets of Baghdad are sure to erupt with joy”) Cheney, Bill (“Military action will not last more than a week”) O’Reilly and Condoleezza (“We don’t want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud”) Rice.

But the above are all partisan voices.

As far as we are aware—and, as founders of the Institute of Expertology, we are experts on the matter—until now no impartial institution has undertaken a comprehensive survey of experts on the war in Iraq. Therefore, our institute has taken it on itself to conduct such an inquiry.

For those who may have been too young to see, or are too old to remember, our original study, “The Experts Speak: The Definitive Compendium of Authoritative Misinformation” (1984), we recall that notwithstanding the best efforts of our worldwide cadre of researchers, we were unable to identify a single expert who was right. At the time, despite those findings, our scholarly integrity compelled us to concede the statistical probability that, in theory, the experts might be right as much as half the time. It was simply that we hadn’t found any.

Our new study of the Iraq war, titled “Mission Accomplished! Or How We Won the War in Iraq,” is a different matter. We can state without fear of contradiction that never before in the history of institute surveys has there been such a dramatic consensus among experts—those who, by virtue of official status, academic standing, formal title, mastery of jargon and/or number of publications, are presumed to know what they are talking about.

They all seemed to agree that:

- The link between Iraq and the al-Qaida terrorists who carried out the Sept. 11 attacks was (to quote New York Times columnist William Safire) an “undisputed fact.”

- Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. (“Only a fool, or possibly a Frenchman, would think otherwise”: Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen.)

- The cost of war would be cheap at the price. (“We are dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction”: then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz.)

- The U.N.’s chief weapons inspector was unreliable. (Hans Blix “couldn’t find the stretch marks on Rosie O’Donnell”: Laura Ingraham, syndicated radio host.)

- Torture is justifiable. (“Reasonable people will disagree about when torture is justified”: John C. Yoo, then-deputy assistant attorney general.)

- Abu Ghraib was not all that bad. (Abu Ghraib “is no different than what happens at the Skull and Bones initiation”: Rush Limbaugh.)

- The U.S. won the war within weeks. (“The only people who



By
CHRISTOPHER CERF
and
VICTOR S. NAVASKY
*Special to the
Los Angeles Times*



Cerf and Navasky are the authors of *Mission Accomplished! Or How We Won the War in Iraq: The Experts Speak*, from which this was adapted.

think this wasn’t a victory are Upper West Side liberals and a few people here in Washington”: Charles Krauthammer, syndicated columnist.)

Although there were differences, the Great Consensus was bipartisan. Sen. John McCain (who said before the fact that “the Iraqi people will greet us as liberators”) observed in September 2003 that “the next three to six months are critical.”

Three months later, Sen. Hillary Clinton (who before the invasion had said that Saddam “will keep trying to develop nuclear weapons”) insisted that “the next six to seven months are critical.”

Barack Obama partisans may try to argue that the Illinois senator did not share in the consensus, but he lacked any foreign policy experience and therefore does not qualify as an expert and is excluded from our study.

Nevertheless, as scrupulous scholars, we concede that there was and is a small group of dissenters from the Great Consensus, but they are for the most part ordinary citizens or extreme left- (and far right-) wingers who don’t really count. Besides, they would only pollute our sample.

Finally, although the institute expresses no opinion of its own on the matter, we feel it is incumbent on us to note apropos the “surge” that there is ample precedent for the “turning point” thesis mentioned above:

- July 7, 2003: “This month will be a political turning point for Iraq.” (Douglas J. Feith, then-undersecretary for Defense.)

- June 16, 2004: “A turning point will come two weeks from today.” (President Bush.)

- Feb. 2, 2005: “On Jan. 30 in Iraq, the world witnessed ... a moment that historians might one day call a turning point.” (Donald Rumsfeld, then-U.S. secretary of Defense.)

- June 14, 2006: “I think—tide turning—see, as I remember—I was raised in the desert, but tides kind of—it’s easy to see a tide turn—did I say those words?” (Bush.)

We trust that the above abstract of our findings will convince any reasonable person that our study was as rigorous, systematic and serious as were the experts themselves.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Obama's Lincoln moment

By TIM RUTTEN

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One-hundred-and-fifty years ago this June, a lanky Illinois lawyer-turned-politician gave a speech that changed the way Americans talked about the great racial issues of their day.

The lawyer was Abraham Lincoln and the speech was the famous "House Divided" address with which he accepted the Republican Party's nomination as a candidate for the U.S. Senate.

Lincoln lost to Stephen Douglas, but the address changed the national conversation on slavery and, two years later, Lincoln was on his way from Springfield to the White House.

America's political story is studded with such addresses—historical signposts that divide that which went before from all that followed on an issue of crucial national importance. Franklin Roosevelt's "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself" speech fundamentally changed Americans' expectations of their government in times of social and economic crisis. John F. Kennedy's address on Catholicism and politics to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in 1960 forever altered the way we think about religion and public office.

Sen. Barack Obama, another lanky lawyer from Illinois, planted one of those rhetorical markers in the political landscape Tuesday when he delivered his "More Perfect Union" speech in Philadelphia, near Independence Hall.

The address was meant to dampen the firestorm of criticism that has attached itself to the senator's campaign since video clips of race-baiting remarks by his Chicago church's former pastor began circulating last week.

But instead of offering a simple exercise in damage control, Obama chose to place his discussion of the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright's incendiary comments in a wider consideration of race in America—and the results were, like those Kennedy achieved in Houston, historic.

Just as every seasoned political hand in 1960 knew that, sooner or later, Kennedy would have to tackle the question of his Catholicism head-on, it's been clear for some time that Obama would have to speak explicitly to the question of race in this campaign. Still, polished orator that he may be, no one could have predicted an address of quite this depth and scope.

"That was the most sophisticated speech on race and politics I've ever heard," said CNN's Bill Schneider, the only network pundit who actually has taught American political history at elite universities.

It was all the more remarkable because, while Kennedy presided over what may have been the greatest speech-writing team in electoral history, Obama—like Lincoln—wrote his address himself, completing the final draft Monday night.

Obama did what he had to do, unequivocally repudiating Wright's extreme rhetoric. But what was truly radical about his analysis was his implicit demand that black and white Americans accept the imperfection of each other's views on race. Embedded in such acceptance is the seed of that "more perfect union" toward which this country—unquestionably great but itself imperfect—must strive.

It was a concept that Obama subtly invoked near the beginning of the speech by pointing to the fact that although the Constitution "was stained by the original sin of slavery," the "answer to the slavery question was already embedded within our Constitution—a Constitution that had at its very core the ideal of equal citizenship under the law; a Constitution that promised its people liberty and justice, and a union that could be and should be perfected over time."

Theologically, original sin is the source of man's fallen nature and the root of his imperfection. Obama went on to build on that concept, invoking the authority of his own mixed heritage—son of a black immigrant father and white mother, raised by a loving white grandmother—and refusing to reject either Wright, a man of good works as well as extreme rhetoric, or his loving grandmother, who was prone to racial stereotypes. Obama demanded that black anger make an allowance for white anxiety and that white resentment make a place for black grievance.

No candidate for national office has ever spoken so candidly or realistically about race as it is lived as a fact of life in America. As he put it Tuesday, "The profound mistake of Reverend Wright's sermons is not that he spoke about racism in our society. It's that he spoke as if our society was static; as if no progress has been made; as if this country ... is still irrevocably bound to a tragic past."

Rutten is a Times columnist. E-mail Rutten at timothy.rutten@latimes.com.

And they said it wouldn't last...

Happy anniversary, War! I can hardly believe we've been together for five years now ... that's a fifth of the way to our silver anniversary!

Traditionally, a fifth anniversary is marked with gifts of wood, symbolizing a "strong and lasting marriage." But I knew you wouldn't mind a gift of Kevlar—I looked it up, and apparently it symbolizes "a strong and lasting insurgency." Somehow it just seemed more appropriate.

It's sooo sweet of you to take me out to dinner for our anniversary, War. I know it's not easy getting a reservation here in Baghdad, with so many of the local restaurants destroyed by suicide bombers. But eating in the Green Zone is fine. No, really! Concrete barriers and barbed wire can be extremely romantic.

Anniversaries make me so nostalgic. I have to confess, though, when we first met I wasn't all that sure about you. Remember those sweet nothings you used to whisper in my ear, about WMD and "shock and awe"? Did you think I was impressed by all that macho posturing? I never really fell for it, you know.

I have to say, you didn't make a great impression on my mother either. She always thought you were a bully and a liar. And I don't know if you noticed this, War, but even your friends were pretty appalled by some of your behavior. Right, wild oats. Whatever. Still, I wasn't surprised so few of your so-called friends showed up for the wedding, and fewer still stayed for the dancing. Some "coalition" that turned out to be!

But I don't want to dwell on the bad times, because we did have some good times, didn't we? Remember those peaceful days between "Mission Accomplished"—I think that was May 1, 2003—and ... and ... well, July 2003 or so, when we could still stroll around Baghdad at dusk, interrupted only by occasional small-arms fire? Those were the days, before the car bombs and IEDs.

We were happy then, weren't we, War?

I really think we were. True, the parades and flowers never did materialize, but I'm not a romantic sap. For me, it was enough that hope was in the air. Children were going to school, political dissidents could speak openly, Iraq was full of a sense of freedom and possibility. So there were no WMD after all—so what? All's fair in love and war, right?—and all's well that ends well!

Except, I guess, that the whole thing hasn't exactly ended well.

Don't you wish we could go back to those halcyon days in the spring and summer of 2003, and have a do-over? This time, we'd do it all so differently, wouldn't we, War? We've learned, we've grown. Oh! If we could only do it all over again, we'd have more

By ROSA BROOKS

Special to the Los Angeles Times

Brooks is a professor at the Georgetown University Law Center. E-mail Brooks at rbrooks@latimescolumnists.com.



troops to start with, and we'd never have had that awful quarrel with nice General Shinseki. We wouldn't disband the Iraqi army, we wouldn't have done that whole de-Baathification thing, we'd have prevented the looting and infrastructure sabotage that helped the insurgency get off the ground. Right?

But you can't go back again, can you? If all that couples counseling has taught me anything, War, it's that we need to take responsibility for what's happened, because when relationships sour, there are always casualties.

In this case, a whole lot of casualties. Nearly 4,000 U.S. troops are dead, and more than 29,000 U.S. troops have been wounded. At least 82,000 Iraqi civilians have died violent deaths since the invasion, and some estimates suggest that as many as 600,000 other Iraqi civilians have died of causes indirectly related to the conflict. They say that nearly 20 percent of Iraqis have had to flee their homes. Oh, I know, War, I know. In five years, every relationship is going to have its ups and downs! And you're right, you've been trying hard lately to turn things around. I do give you credit for that. Your surge brought violence down, even though it seems to be rising again. And you've tried so hard to listen, finally, and understand that an enduring relationship has to be about more than just brute force.

But, War, it's just not enough. It's too little, too late. "Political progress," "reconciliation"—pretty words, but I just can't see it happening.

Anyway, War, I don't like to be a stick in the mud, but it kind of bothers me that these days we're jumping into bed with absolutely everyone: Sunni insurgents, Shiite insurgents, Kurds, God knows who else. It's like being inside Eliot Spitzer's marriage and James McGreevey's marriage and David Paterson's marriage, all at once.

Look, War, I don't quite know how to say this, on our anniversary and everything, but ...

I want a divorce.

Thou shalt not fail to recycle

By BARRY GOTTLIEB

SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

There's nothing like the Easter season to resurrect religious news.

First the Vatican launched a PR campaign to convince people that the Inquisition wasn't really as bad as it appeared to be by opening an exhibit of artifacts it says will "expose some myths" about the church's glory days during the Middle Ages. Hey, it was a bunch of guys kidding around and having a good time. So it went a little too far. Haven't you ever been to a frat party?

Maybe they have a point. I mean, it's not like they were waterboarding, you know.

Then earlier this month, in an interview in the Vatican newspaper *l'Osservatore Romano* (motto: "All the news God thinks is fit to print"), Msgr. Gianfranco Girotti, the head of the Apostolic Penitentiary—the office that deals with sins and penance—added some new sins to the long list of life's "don'ts." He announced that pollution, mind-damaging drugs, genetic experiments and the accumulation of excess wealth are now all sins. Luckily, filling a cathedral with incense, drinking sacramental wine and raking in bucks from parishioners are exempt.

This isn't the first time in recent history the Vatican has issued rules to live by. About a year ago, it released the Ten Commandments for drivers—formal name, "Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road"—which warned us away from road rage, drunk driving, rude gestures, cursing and having sex in the car. Luckily it didn't say anything about not driving while sending a text message, reading the newspaper, combing your hair or retrieving a burrito that rolled under the seat, so at least we don't have to change all of our driving habits.

The question is, why do they need to add new sins? After all, we have plenty of old ones to choose from. In fact, I'd be hard-pressed to think that many of us have even begun to tap the depths of a list that includes greed, envy, sloth, murder and astrology.

They might be adding the new sins to make sure we're aware of all the things we're not supposed to do, although I'd be surprised to learn that anyone who didn't realize pollution was bad would be swayed by a monsignor's labeling it as a sin. Then again, if the threat of eternity in hell will make someone stop dumping chemicals in the water supply, quit spewing carcinogenic smoke or go out and buy a Prius, then I'm all for it.

I suspect the real reason the church is doing this is to attempt to be hip and stay up to date. It does that from time to time. One year it dumps Latin so people can actually understand what's going on; the next it sets "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" to Green Day's music and plays it on an autoharp during Mass.

Since a recent study by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life found that the Roman Catholic Church has lost more members than any faith in the United States, it obviously needs to start doing something to keep people on board. And what better way than to add green sins to the list of cardinal, mortal and venial ones?

"Bless me, father, for I have sinned. It has been since the second quarter of the last fiscal year that I gave my last confession. These are my sins. I talked back to my mother. I also smoked pot, didn't recycle three bottles and one can, and made a killing by buying all the neighbors' houses at foreclosure and flipping them."

Three Our Fathers, two Hail Marys and one Forgive Me Sierra Club and all will be well with our karma again.

If the church really wants to be hip, it would unveil Catholic Church 2.0, with social networking sites like MyPew and Faithbook, and a virtual online world called AfterLife (motto: "When your Second Life is over"). When it does, be careful about spending too much time in front of the computer.






You might be accused of worshipping a false idol.

Gottlieb, the author of *If It's Such a Small World Then Why Have I Been Sitting on This Airplane For Twelve Hours?*, writes at maddog-productions.com.

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
				
Mostly sunny. East winds 10 mph.	Partly cloudy. A slight chance of showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼75°	▲88° ▼78°	▲85° ▼74°	▲84° ▼75°	▲85° ▼75°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	▲82 ▼68
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲86 ▼77
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲87 ▼76
Chuuk	Cloudy	▲78 ▼74
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲89 ▼78
Kosrae	Cloudy	▲84 ▼75
Majuro	Partly Sunny	▲82 ▼75

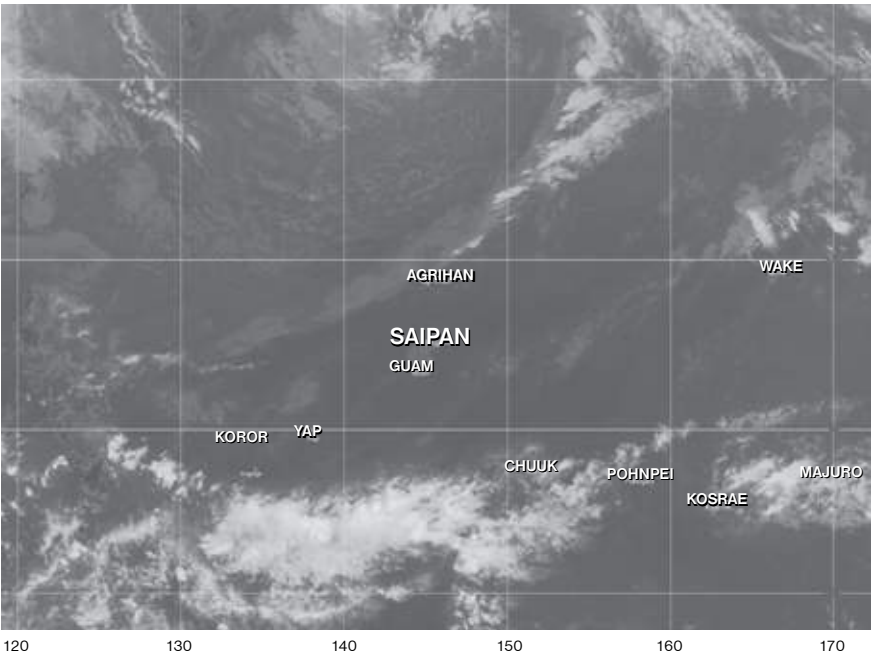
Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Sunny	▲75 ▼61
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	▲65 ▼41
Hong Kong	Rain	▲73 ▼62
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲83 ▼71
London	Flurries	▲41 ▼34
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲76 ▼54
Manila	Cloudy	▲87 ▼75
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲74 ▼59
Miami	Showers	▲83 ▼69
New York	Cloudy	▲45 ▼30
Osaka	Sunny	▲60 ▼46
Paris	Showers	▲46 ▼29
Pusan	Partly Sunny	▲58 ▼48
Rome	Rain	▲56 ▼43
Salem	Partly Sunny	▲55 ▼38
San Francisco	Sunny	▲65 ▼45
Seoul	Cloudy	▲59 ▼43
Tokyo	Sunny	▲61 ▼44
Washington, DC	Rain	▲47 ▼33

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
02:07AM Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
08:05AM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
02:33PM Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
08:27PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N151E to the north of CNMI at 20N145E to 17N140E to 15N130E. Scattered showers are found along and up to 80 miles west of the cold front. Low-level convergent winds just northwest of Wake island are generating scattered showers in an area bounded by 25N167E to 25N170E to 20N165E to 20N161E and back to 25N167E. An upper-level trough is enhancing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms between 20N and 25N from 170E to 177E. Divergence aloft and trade-wind convergence are combining to produce numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms southeast of Koror between 1N and 5N from 132E to 144E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:20AM	6:28PM
Sunday	6:19AM	6:28PM
Monday	6:18AM	6:28PM
Tuesday	6:18AM	6:29PM
Wednesday	6:17AM	6:29PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	06:51PM	06:18AM
Sunday	07:40PM	06:53AM
Monday	08:29PM	07:29AM
Tuesday	09:20PM	08:08AM
Wednesday	10:12PM	08:49AM

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Sunday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$182. Off-island subscription rate is \$376 per year. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 16, 2008

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
Saipan-Rota CO 9313 8:30am 9:05am 3,4,7	Rota-Saipan CO 9598 11:10am 11:45am 1,2,6
Saipan-Guam CO9317 4:00am 4:50am Daily CO9597 8:30am 9:20am 1,2,5,6 CO9313 8:30am 10:00am 3,4,7 via Rota CO9601 12:30pm 1:20pm Daily CO9603 3:30pm 4:20pm Daily CO9605 6:30pm 7:20pm Daily CO9599 9:30pm 10:20pm Daily	Guam-Saipan CO 9316 2:30am 3:20am Daily CO9596 7:00am 7:50am Daily CO9598 10:15am 11:45am 1,2,6 via Rota CO9600 10:45am 11:35am 3,4,5,7 CO9602 2:00pm 2:50pm Daily CO9604 5:00pm 5:50pm Daily CO9606 8:00pm 8:50pm Daily
Saipan-Narita NW 078 8:25am 1:30pm Daily via Nagoya NW 075 4:50pm 7:30pm Daily	Narita-Saipan NW 076 10:35am 3:05pm Daily NW 077 6:15pm 1:10am+1 Daily via Nagoya
Saipan-Osaka NW 083 4:20pm 7:10pm Daily	Osaka-Saipan NW 084 10:30am 3:05pm Daily
Saipan-Nagoya NW 078 8:40am 11:25am Daily	Nagoya-Saipan NW 077 9:00pm 1:25am+1 Daily
Saipan-Manila CO 895 4:45pm 6:35pm 6 CO 895 6:45pm 8:35pm 3	Manila-Saipan CO 890 9:15am 2:55pm 6 CO 890 11:45am 5:35pm 3
Saipan-Seoul OZ 604 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ 604 2:40am 6:30am 2,3,4,5,6,7 OZ 606 3:30pm 7:00pm 2,4,6,7	Seoul-Saipan OZ 605 9:00am 2:30pm 2,4,6,7 OZ 603 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ 603 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1,2,3,4,5,6
Saipan-Busan OZ 608 4:00am 7:35am 1,4,5,7	Busan-Saipan OZ 607 9:30pm 2:50am+1 3,4,6,7
Saipan-Guanzhou CZ 3008 5:00am 8:00am 2,6	Guanzhou-Saipan CZ 3007 8:00pm 4:00am+1 1,5
Guam-Manila CO 891 6:00am 10:30am 3 via Yap and Koror CO 893 6:30am 8:05am 6 CO 893 8:25am 10:00am 2,7 CO 893 5:50pm 9:10pm 5 via Koror CO 933 7:00pm 8:40pm Daily PR 111 6:00am 7:45am 1,2,4,6,7	Manila-Guam CO 894 11:20am 4:55pm 2,7 CO 894 7:45pm 1:20am+1 6 CO 892 9:45pm 6:30am+1 3 via Koror and Yap CO 892 10:10pm 5:30am+1 5 via Koror CO 934 10:55pm 4:30am+1 Daily PR 110 10:15pm 4:00am+1 1,3,5,6,7
Guam-Hongkong CO 909 6:50pm 9:35pm 1,5	Hongkong-Guam CO 910 10:35pm 5:15am+1 1,5
Guam-Rota CO 9598 10:15am 10:45am 1,2,6	Rota-Guam CO 9313 9:30am 10:00am 3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 100 7:00am 7:30am Daily				FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 100 7:50am 8:20am Daily				FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 200 9:00am 9:30am Daily				FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
FRE 200 9:50am 10:15am Daily				Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
Guam-Rota				FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 300 4:00pm 4:30pm Daily				FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 300 4:50pm 5:25pm Daily				FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 400 6:00pm 6:30pm Daily				FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 400 6:45pm 7:15pm Daily				FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 101 6:45am 6:55am Daily				FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 103 7:30am 7:40am Daily				FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 105 8:00am 8:10am Daily				FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 107 8:40am 8:50am Daily				FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily
FRE 109* 9:10am 9:20am Daily							
FRE 111* 10:45am 10:55am Daily							



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Schedule of Religious Services																										
CATHOLIC																										
Mt. Carmel Cathedral Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm Monday-Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6am and 6pm																										
Korean Center Sunday: 10:30am Wednesday: 10am Thursday-Friday: 8pm Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm																										
Kristo Rai Parish Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am Monday- Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6am and 6pm Saturday: 6am and 6pm																										
Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish Wednesday Mass: 6pm First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm Saturday Mass: 6pm Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am																										
Saint Jude Parish Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm																										
San Antonio Parish Sunday: 6am and 8am Tuesday and Friday: 6pm																										
San Francisco de Borja-Rota Sunday: 6am and 8am Monday-Saturday: 6am Wednesday: 6pm																										
San Isidro-Rota Sunday: 5am and 10am Monday-Wednesday: 7pm Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm																										
San Jose (Oleal) Parish Sunday: 6am and 7:30am Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm																										
San Roque Parish Sunday: 9am Wednesday: 6pm Saturday: 10:30am																										
San Vicente Parish Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm Monday-Saturday: 6pm																										
Santa Remedios Sunday: 7:30am Tuesday: 6pm Saturday: 10am-Baptism																										
Santa Soledad Sunday: 7:30am																										
PROTESTANT																										
Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am Sunday School for Children: 10-11am Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm																										
Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan Sunday School: 9am Sunday Morning Worship: 10am Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm																										
Chinese Christian Church of Saipan Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm																										
Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan Worship/Study Opportunities Adult Sunday School: 9am Youth Sunday School: 9am English Worship Service Sunday: 10am Sunday Service: 5:30pm Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm; Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm Mid-week Service: 7:30pm Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm																										
Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan St. Paul's Episcopal Church Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am Place: Vicarage, Chalan Lulau, Call 235-0545 for directions																										
Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan Worship Service: 9am GBI Classes: 4-6pm Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am Sunday: 7am Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm																										
Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog) Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English) Saturday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45pm (Tagalog) Sunday: 6:45am (English) Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)																										
Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville Sunday Services 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM Family Worship 3:00 PM Choir Rehearsal Wednesdays at Parsonage 7:00 PM Prayer, Share and Care																										
Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation) Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal 8:00am-Church Service																										
(Tagalog) 9:15am-Sunday School Wednesday: 8:00pm-Prayer Meeting Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church) Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)																										
Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan English Service: 9-11am, Sunday Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday																										
Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan Sunday School: 8:20am Sunday Adult: 10am Sunday Adult: 11:30am Sunday Evening: 7:30pm Wednesday: 8pm																										
Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan Sunday Worship Service: 10am-12noon Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)																										
Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan English Worship Service: 9-10:30am Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm English Sunday School: 11am-12pm Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm Wednesday Prayer Meeting: English, 7pm-8pm Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm																										
Missions Connection Ministry Every Sunday Celebrations: 10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog) Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm Youth Impact Friday: 7pm Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm																										
Northern Marianas Christian Church Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided) Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620																										
Saipan Bible Fellowship Church Sunday School: 9:30-10am Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm																										
Saipan Christian Church Sunday: 7:30am-10am Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting) Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)																										
Saipan Church of Christ Sunday Bible Class: 9am Sunday Worship: 10am Sunday Worship English: 6pm Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm																										
Saipan Community Church (Sunday Services) Palau Service: 7:30am-9am English Service: 10am-11:30am Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm																										
Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan (Saturday Church Services) Sabbath School Program: 9-10am Lesson Study: 10-10:40am Divine Service: 11-12pm Visitation: 3-4pm Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm Sundown Worship: 6-7pm																										
First Baptist Church (Formerly Saipan Baptist Church) Afetna St., San Antonio Sunday <table><tr><td></td><td>9am</td><td>Sunday school</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>10am</td><td>Regular worship</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>6pm</td><td>worship</td></tr><tr><td>Wednesday</td><td>7pm</td><td>worship</td></tr></table> Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.				9am	Sunday school		10am	Regular worship		6pm	worship	Wednesday	7pm	worship												
	9am	Sunday school																								
	10am	Regular worship																								
	6pm	worship																								
Wednesday	7pm	worship																								
Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center Phone 234-0209 New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches. Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi Service Times Sunday 10:00am Worship Service Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service Saturday 10:00am Evangelism																										
Upper Room International Ministries Sunday 5:30am-6:30am Morning prayer <table><tr><td></td><td>7am-9am</td><td>English service</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>7am-9am</td><td>Sunday school</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>10am-12noon</td><td>English service,</td></tr><tr><td>Koblerville</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Wednesday</td><td>7pm-9pm</td><td>Prayer meeting</td></tr><tr><td>Saturday</td><td>7pm-9pm</td><td>Tagalog service</td></tr><tr><td>Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Gualo Rai, Saipan</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>				7am-9am	English service		7am-9am	Sunday school		10am-12noon	English service,	Koblerville			Wednesday	7pm-9pm	Prayer meeting	Saturday	7pm-9pm	Tagalog service	Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church			Gualo Rai, Saipan		
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Saturday	7pm-9pm	Tagalog service																								
Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church																										
Gualo Rai, Saipan																										
Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church Sunday School: 9:30am Sunday AM Worship:10:30am Sunday PM Worship:7:00am Wed Worship: 7:30pm Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S																										

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

MARCH 22, 1999

CNMI loses luster
Due to the instability of local laws and regulations, hotel presidents and general managers believe that the CNMI has become an unfavorable place to do business. This was the assessment made by hotel executives in a survey conducted by the Hotel Association of Northern Mariana Islands to find out how they look at the investment opportunities in the CNMI.

Ex-governor bolts party for comeback
Tired of years of bickerings and disunity within the party, former Governor Froilan C. Tenorio officially resigned as a Democrat to prepare the groundwork for his reelection bid in the year 2001 general elections under a new political party. A party member since 1979 when he first for the Senate, Tenorio wrote to former Mayor Jose Rios, acting chairperson of the Democratic Party, to inform him that he was terminating his membership.

Study raises specter of soaring jobless rate
With the expected removal of trade quotas in the year 2005 by the World Trade Organization, the Northern Marianas will lose some 3,090 jobs annually, including 2,030 in the garment industry. Over a seven-year period, the CNMI economy would lose a net of 2,130 jobs per year. By the year 2005, the Northern Marianas would have roughly one-third fewer jobs than it does today.

MARCH 22, 2000

House clears 2000 budget
The House of Representatives finally passed the much-delayed FY 2000 budget yesterday halfway through the fiscal year, agreeing to augment share of key agencies, including that of the Legislature, while slashing appropriation to several government programs. Education, health, and public safety will eat up nearly half of the \$211 million proposed spending level as their funding have been increased by the House Ways and Means Committee.

Legislature told to plug loopholes in retirement law
NMI Retirement Fund Administrator Juan S. Torres has asked the assistance of House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial in plugging the loopholes in the current retirement laws which has extremely affected the financial stability of the agency. While showing appreciation for the House Speaker's gesture in assisting the Fund resolve this problem, Mr. Torres warned the Legislature against passing measures that will only contribute to the depletion of the agency's assets.

NMI eyes securities bourse
Given the dominance of United States-based banking laws here, prospects are bright for the development of a finance-based activity in the Northern Marianas as efforts are being intensified to alleviate CNMI's dependence on the highly-volatile tourism and garment industries. Being a U.S. jurisdiction, which is only at least three hours plane ride away from the heavily populated Asia, makes the establishment of a securities exchange bourse in the Northern Marianas feasible, commerce officials said.

MARCH 22, 2001

CUC, Enron seals deal on 60MW power plant
After almost a year of tedious negotiation, the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation and Enron International Mariana Power Inc. finally closed the deal on the controversial 60-megawatt power plant project. Highly-placed sources disclosed CUC and Enron officials yesterday ironed out remaining concerns including power plant costs, negotiating terms and cost ratios.

Japanese firm wants to develop old Rota hotel
A check on the Office of Public Lands revealed that a Japanese company has expressed interest in developing an abandoned hotel in Rota. Public Lands Administrator Bertha C. Leon Guerrero yesterday revealed her office has also received an inquiry to develop an area where the Pau Pau Hotel in Rota used to stand.

Business

Reports: Economy weakening more

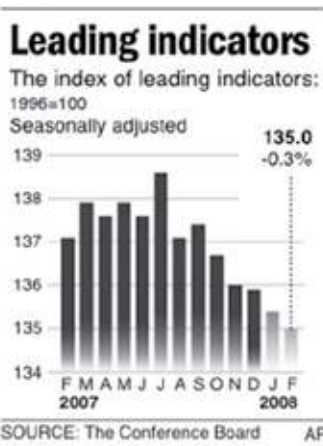
NEW YORK (AP)—A rise in jobless claims and a drop in a key forecasting gauge provided the latest evidence that the U.S. economy is faltering and may be slipping into recession.

The Conference Board, a business-backed research group, said Thursday that its index of leading economic indicators fell in February for the fifth consecutive month. The index, which is designed to forecast where the nation's economy is headed in the next three to six months, dipped 0.3 percent to 135.0 in February after slumping 0.4 percent the month before.

In Washington, meanwhile, the Labor Department said that applications for unemployment benefits totaled 378,000 last week. That was an increase of 22,000 from the previous week and the highest level in nearly two months.

The four-week average for new claims rose to 365,250, which was the highest level since a flood of claims caused by the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes.

Ken Goldstein, labor econo-



mist at the Conference Board, said in a statement accompanying the leading indicators report that economic signals “are flashing yellow.”

He said the numbers indicate “the economy may be grinding to a halt” and that “a small contraction in economic activity cannot be ruled out.”

A Federal Reserve reading of business activity in the Philadelphia area showed contraction—but not as much as analysts expected. The news helped the stock market on Thursday recover from a drop the day before.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Lawyer to plead guilty in scheme
LOS ANGELES (AP)—Prominent attorney Melvyn Weiss has agreed to plead guilty to a racketeering charge in a lucrative kick-back scheme involving payments to plaintiffs in class-action lawsuits targeting some of the largest corporations in the nation, federal prosecutors said Thursday. Weiss, 72, also will acknowledge that he and others concealed secret payment arrangements that his firm, Milberg Weiss, had with named plaintiffs in the lawsuits, prosecutors said in a statement. Under a plea deal, he could be sentenced to up to 33 months in prison and pay \$10 million.

Oil falls on economy worries
NEW YORK (AP)—Oil futures extended their declines Thursday as concerns about the economy and demand for oil grew and the dollar strengthened. Retail gas prices, meanwhile, fell further below their recent records, while diesel rose to a new record above \$4 a gallon. Light, sweet crude for May delivery fell 70 cents to settle at \$101.84 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange Thursday after sliding to as low as \$98.65 earlier. It was the first dip by a front-month oil contract under \$100 since March 5. Oil has fallen sharply this week, dropping about 9 percent, since setting a new trading record of \$111.80 on Monday.

Stocks cap volatile week with big gains
NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street capped a week of remarkable volatility with a big advance Thursday that left stocks higher for the week but didn't silence all of investors' concerns about the economy and the financial system. The Dow on Thursday rose 261.66, or 2.16 percent, to 12,361.32, and gained 3.43 percent for the week. Broader stock indicators also advanced. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 31.09, or 2.39 percent, to 1,329.51, and the Nasdaq composite index rose 48.15, or 2.18 percent, to 2,258.11. For the week, the S&P rose 3.21 percent, while the Nasdaq gained 2.06 percent.

Starbucks ordered to pay back tips
SAN DIEGO (AP)—A Superior Court judge on Thursday ordered Starbucks Corp. to pay its California baristas more than \$100 million in back tips and interest that the coffee chain paid to shift supervisors. San Diego Superior Court Judge Patricia Cowett also issued an injunction that prevents Starbucks' shift supervisors from sharing in future tips, saying state law prohibits managers and supervisors from sharing in employee gratuities. The lawsuit was filed in October 2004 by Jou Chou, a former Starbucks barista in La Jolla, who complained shift supervisors were sharing in employee tips.

Nation

Feds fire 2 for looking at Obama file

WASHINGTON (AP)—Two contract employees for the State Department have been fired and a third disciplined for inappropriately looking at Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama's passport file, and the department is investigating whether political or other motives were involved, senior officials said Thursday.

Spokesman Sean McCormack said that for now it appears that nothing other than "imprudent curiosity" was involved in three separate breaches of the Illinois senator's personal information. It is not clear whether the employees saw anything other than the basic personal data such as name,

citizenship, age and place of birth that is required when a person fills out a passport application.

The breaches occurred on Jan. 9, Feb. 21 and March 14, and were detected by internal State Department computer checks, McCormack said. The department's top management officer, Undersecretary Patrick Kennedy, said certain records, including those of high-profile people, are "flagged" with a computer tag that tips off supervisors when someone tries to view the records without a proper reason.

The State Department would

not release the names of those who were fired and disciplined, or the names of the two companies they worked for. The department's inspector general is investigating.

"We believe this was out of imprudent curiosity, but we are taking steps to reassure ourselves that that is, in fact, the case," McCormack said.

The firings and unspecified discipline of the third employee already had occurred when senior State Department officials learned of the breaches. Kennedy called that a failing.



Obama

Michigan primary re-do plan collapses

WASHINGTON (AP)—The drive for a second Michigan presidential primary collapsed Thursday, and a fresh dispute broke out between Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton over the fate of the state's 156 national convention delegates.

Obama's campaign said a fair resolution would be to split them evenly with Clinton. Aides to the former first lady instantly rejected the idea and said they would consider a mail-in primary - even though Obama has raised concerns about the security of a vote by mail organized so quickly.

Obama leads the overall competition for convention delegates, and Clinton has been leading the effort to hold a revote in Michigan, eager for a chance to close the gap on her rival.

The state held a primary in January, so early in the year that it violated party rules. As a result, it was stripped of its delegates. Obama and several other Democratic candidates removed their name from the Michigan ballot and all Democratic candidates agreed not to campaign there.

Michigan Democratic leaders

had proposed a do-over primary, to be conducted by the state on June 3 with funding by private donors. But lawmakers showed a lack of enthusiasm for a bill authorizing the vote, and state Senate adjourned Thursday without taking it up.

Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm, who has endorsed Clinton, said in a statement that she was deeply disappointed the June 3 do-over was no longer a possibility.

"We will turn our attention to other options," she said. "There is

no road to the White House that does not go through Michigan"

In a joint statement before adjourning for two weeks Michigan Democratic House Speaker Andy Dillon and House floor leader Rep. Steve Tobocman said, "Regardless of candidate preference, members had concerns over the estimated 100,000 Michigan Democrats who would have been unable to participate in a do-over election, as well as logistical and legal difficulties faced by local clerks." They said they would help try to find a solution that would seat Michigan delegates.



ACROSS THE NATION

Inspector arrested in NYC crane collapse

NEW YORK (AP)—A city inspector has been charged with lying about checking on a construction crane that collapsed 11 days later, killing seven people in a dense Manhattan neighborhood. Edward Marquette, 46, was arraigned and released without bail Thursday on charges of falsifying business records and offering a false instrument for filing. Marquette, who earns \$52,283 a year as an inspector in the department's division of cranes and derricks, was arrested Wednesday night.

Stingray kills woman on boat in Fla.

MARATHON, Fla. (AP)—A 75-pound stingray killed a Michigan woman Thursday when it flew out of the water and struck her face as she rode a boat in the Florida Keys, officials said. Judy Kay Zagorski, of Pigeon, Mich., was sitting in the front seat of a boat going 25 mph when the spotted eagle ray, with a wingspan of 5 to 6 feet, leaped out of the water, said Jorge Pino, spokesman for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The 57-year-old woman's father was driving the boat on the Atlantic Ocean side of Vaca Key, Pino said. The collision knocked Zagorski backward onto the floor of the boat, Pino said. The impact likely killed the woman, and she did not appear to have puncture wounds from the ray's barb, Pino said.

Man kills 2, self at Va. apartments

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (AP)—A man opened fire on workers coming to inspect the apartment his mother had been ordered to leave, killing two and wounding three before committing suicide, authorities said Thursday. William T. Smith opened the door Wednesday afternoon at the Thalia Gardens complex and began shooting with an AK-47 assault rifle and a Mac 10 9mm semiautomatic handgun, police spokeswoman Margie Long said. Smith, 52, fatally shot 63-year-old maintenance technician Sam Sheshul inside the two-story brick apartment building, Long said. The other workers ran outside, but Smith followed them, still shooting, she said. Officers arrived to find maintenance technician Rebecca Diane Hughes, 32, dead in the parking lot and three injured people.

Ex-SLA member freed from Calif. prison

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The former Symbionese Liberation Army fugitive who hid for years by posing as an ordinary housewife was released from prison Thursday after serving time for trying to bomb police cars, corrections officials said. Sara Jane Olson, formerly known as Kathleen Soliah, walked out of the Central Women's Facility in Chowchilla, said Bill Sessa, a state Department of Corrections spokesman. In 2001, Olson pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 14 years in prison for attempting to bomb police cars in 1975 with the SLA, the group best known for kidnapping newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst. Olson vanished soon after she was charged for the attempted bombings and reinvented herself as a housewife.

Statehouses often look like frat houses

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) -- Of all the wisecracks heard in the marble halls of New York's Capitol after Gov. Eliot Spitzer's downfall in a call-girl scandal, one just enlightened as much as it stung: Spitzer's got to be the only guy in Albany who PAYS for sex.

It is an open secret that there is a lot of fooling around going on at the statehouse. And at other statehouses, too.

In fact, Gov. David Paterson, in an extraordinary news conference on Tuesday, his first full day on the job after taking over from Spitzer, acknowledged he had had extramarital affairs with a number of women while he was a state senator.

At night, legislators, young staffers, younger interns, lobbyists and reporters mix at two or three bars just blocks from the Capitol. And there are numerous receptions, campaign stops and caucuses where lawmakers, straight and gay alike, often have many opportunities for a hookup.

Up until just a few years ago, lawmakers would go "window shopping" for interns at the start of every legislative session. In a practice that went on for decades, the interns would be corraled in a Capitol newsstand so that legislators could pick their office help based on their looks, not their resumes.

The hanky-panky even has its own lexicon: There's the "Bear Mountain Compact," which says that what goes on north of the state park just outside New York City stays there. Lobbyists, staffers and reporters who seek to enhance their influence by bedding powerful lawmakers are known as "big game hunters." And the men who sleep with the women lawmakers are "boy toys."

"Unfortunately, many of the people who seek public office are flawed people to begin with and the environment in Albany just tends to bring that out," said Paul Clyne, former district attorney in Albany.



A large portion of town is covered in floodwater after a breach in the Coon Island levee Thursday, March 20, 2008 in Poplar Bluff, Mo. AP

Weary Midwesterners battle rising rivers again

FENTON, Mo. (AP)—With more than a dozen people killed by floodwaters and rivers still rising, weary Midwesterners on Thursday weighed not just the prospect of a sodden cleanup but the likelihood that their communities could be inundated again.

Families in some areas have been forced from their homes multiple times in the past few

years, making the routine of filling sandbags and rescuing furniture into a familiar drill.

"We've been through this before," said Michelle Buhlinger, who works for the school district in Valley Park in suburban St. Louis. "We're expecting the levee to hold up, but we don't want to take any chances."

The first day of spring brought

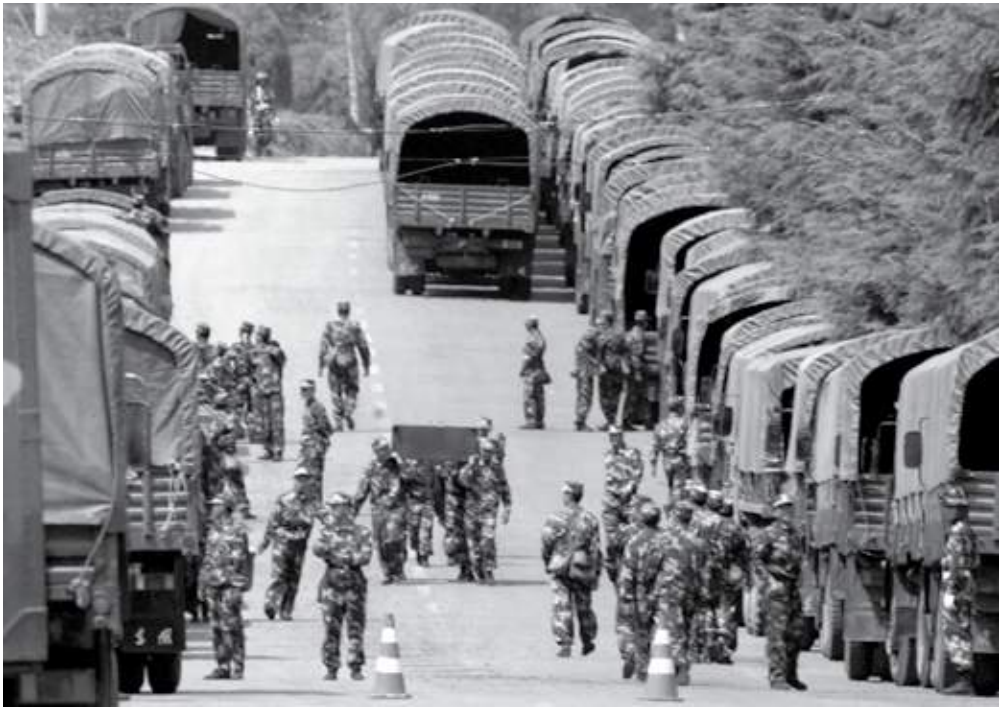
much-needed sunshine to some flooded communities, but many swelling rivers were not expected to crest until the weekend in Arkansas, Missouri, southern Illinois, southern Indiana and Kentucky.

The worst flooding happened in smaller rivers across the nation's midsection. Major channels such as the Mississippi,

Missouri and Ohio rivers saw only minor flooding.

In Fenton, another suburb, Jeff Rogles joined dozens of volunteers to fill sandbags and pile them against downtown businesses near the fast-rising Meramec River, which was expected to reach more than 20 feet above flood stage in some spots near St. Louis.

Asia



Chinese paramilitary police unload equipment on a road on the outskirts of Hutiaoxia, southeast of Zhongdian, in China's Yunnan province Thursday, March 20, 2008.

China blankets Tibet with troops

ZHONGDIAN, China (AP)—China blanketed restive Tibetan areas Thursday with a huge buildup of troops, turning small towns across a wide swath of western China into armed encampments.

Beijing acknowledged that last week's anti-government protests had spread far beyond Tibet's borders and that police opened fire on protesters. It warned foreign tourists and journalists to stay away from a huge expanse of territory across four provinces.

In an overture of peace, the Dalai Lama offered to meet with Chinese President Hu Jintao and other leaders, reiterating that he was not asking for

Tibetan independence.

China has repeatedly ignored calls for dialogue, accusing the exiled Tibetan leader and his supporters of organizing violence in hopes of sabotaging the upcoming Beijing Olympics and promoting Tibetan independence.

Hundreds of paramilitary troops aboard at least 80 trucks were seen traveling along the main road winding through the mountains into southeastern Tibet. Others set up camp and patrolled streets in riot gear, helmets and rifles in the town of Tiger Leaping Gorge, a tourist attraction in Yunnan province bordering Tibet.

Farther north, the largely Tibetan county of Zhongdian, renamed Shangri-la a decade ago, was swarmed by 400 armed police. Many carried rifles and what appeared to be tear gas launchers. Residents walked freely among the military, and there was no sign of a daytime curfew.

The troop mobilization was helping authorities reassert control after the broadest, most sustained protests by Tibetans against Chinese rule in decades. Demonstrations had flared across Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces in support of protests that started in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa.

7.2-magnitude quake strikes China

BEIJING (AP)—A major earthquake struck a sparsely populated region of western China early Friday. Some houses collapsed, but there were no injuries, state media reported.

The 7.2-magnitude quake hit at 6:33 a.m. (2233 GMT Thursday), about 140 miles southeast of the city of Hotan in southwest Xinjiang province, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

A spokesman for China's Earthquake Administration said it was a 7.3 magnitude quake. There were no reports

of injuries, he said, and the area is sparsely populated.

There were four aftershocks in the region, ranging from 5.0 to 5.2 magnitude, according to a notice on the Web site of the administration.

The earthquakes occurred around the towns of Ahqan and Bostan, just north of the Kunlun mountains, with a total population of around 13,400 people, according to Chinese state media.

China's state-run television channel, CCTV, said that some

houses had collapsed, but that no one was hurt.

Dale Grant, a USGS geophysicist, described the area as "very seismically active," but said Friday's temblor was the biggest there on record.

Xinjiang is a predominantly Muslim region with a culture that is distinctly different from that of China's ethnic Han majority.

China's Earthquake Administration said the last earthquake in the Hotan area struck in 1992, with a magnitude of 5.9.

Pakistan suicide bomb kills 5 soldiers

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—A suicide car bomb killed five Pakistani soldiers and wounded nine others near the Afghan border on Thursday, the military said.

The bomber attacked security forces in South Waziristan's main town of Wana, a military statement said.

Al-Qaida- and Taliban-linked militants are believed to operate in the remote tribal area

in the rugged, lawless tribal regions along the Afghan-Pakistan border. Pakistani troops have fought intense battles there in recent years.

U.S.-led coalition forces based across the Afghan border also have launched attacks on militants in the area. On Sunday, missiles that witnesses say came from an unmanned drone struck a suspected militant safehouse and killed about 20 people three

miles outside of Wana.

Only U.S.-led coalition forces in Afghanistan are known to operate unmanned drones in the region.

A string of militant attacks—many of them suicide bombings—have killed more than 600 people in Pakistan since beginning of the year. Authorities blame the attacks on militants operating in the tribal regions along Afghanistan.

World

Osama bin Laden urges jihad for Palestinians

CAIRO, Egypt (AP)—Osama bin Laden lashed out Thursday at Palestinian peace negotiations with Israel and called for a holy war to liberate the Palestinian lands.

A day after a bin Laden audio on a militant Web site threatened Europeans, Al-Jazeera TV broadcast audio excerpts attributed to the al-Qaida leader that urge Palestinians to ignore political parties "mired in trickery of the blasphemous democracy" and to rely on armed might.

"Palestine cannot be retaken by negotiations and dialogue, but with fire and iron," he said.

It was the first time bin Laden spoke of the Palestinian ques-

tion at length since the deteriorating situation in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip, where the Israeli military has been fighting with militants who fire rockets into southern Israel.

Bin Laden added that Palestinians who are unable to fight in the "land of Al-Quds"—a Muslim reference to Jerusalem—should join the al-Qaida fight in Iraq.

"The nearest field of jihad today to support our people in Palestine is the Iraqi field," he said.

He also called on the people of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to "help in support

of their mujahedeen brothers in Iraq, which is the greatest opportunity and the biggest task." Al-Jazeera did not say how it obtained the recording, which was broadcast with an old photograph of bin Laden in a white headscarf and traditional Arab dress.

There was no indication how recently the recording was made, or if it was an unreleased part of the audio posted late Wednesday on an extremist Web site that has carried al-Qaida statements in the past. The two messages were bin Laden's first this year.

In the first recording, bin Laden accused Pope Benedict XVI of helping in a "new Crusade" against Muslims and warned of a "severe" reaction for Europeans' publication of cartoons seen by Muslims as insulting Islam's prophet.

In the audio on Al-Jazeera, bin Laden said the sufferings of Palestinians in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip began when Arab leaders supported the U.S.-hosted Mideast peace conference in Annapolis, Md., and the "Zionist entity," the militant name for Israel.

The mention of the Annapolis summit in November was the only time reference given in the audio.



bin Laden

Iraqi PM rallies morale

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraq's prime minister pledged Thursday that the country would play an active role on the world stage in an upbeat speech delivered as this troubled nation entered a sixth year of war. Despite signs of progress, many Iraqis hold out little hope for a quick end to their suffering.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki spoke five years to the day after U.S. forces fired a first salvo of missiles at Baghdad before dawn on March 20, 2003, triggering a conflict that toppled Saddam Hussein but has claimed the lives of tens of thousands of Iraqis and nearly 4,000 American troops.

In a nationally televised address, al-Maliki promised to strengthen Iraq's role in world affairs, assuring the Iraqi people that their nation "cannot be anything but strong, unified and active."

"It will not be isolated," al-Maliki said of Iraq. "As Iraq has triumphed over terrorism, it will triumph in the international arena."

Al-Maliki's optimistic remarks were the latest in a series of statements aimed at rallying national morale and projecting the image of Iraq as a country on the road to recovery after

five years of bombs, bullets and sectarian slaughter.

On Wednesday, al-Maliki, a Shiite, attended religious celebrations in Azamiyah, a Sunni Arab neighborhood of Baghdad that had been a bastion of al-Qaida in Iraq and other Sunni extremist groups.

He delivered his remarks Thursday at a cultural festival in Hillah, a mostly Shiite city about 60 miles south of Baghdad near the ruins of fabled Babylon, one of the great cities of the ancient world. Al-Maliki said the cultural festival was a sign that normal life was returning to Iraq. He cut short his remarks a few moments later when the electricity failed.

American officials have also touted the sharp decline in violence over the past year as a sign that the Bush administration's strategy in Iraq is beginning to show signs of success, despite widespread opposition to the conflict within the American public.

According to the U.S. military, attacks have fallen by about 60 percent since early last year, when President Bush rushed about 30,000 American reinforcements to curb a wave of sectarian massacres that plunged the nation to the brink of full-scale civil war.

Liberia readies first census in 24 years

SELEGA, Liberia (AP)—The deep distrust of government created by years of war is evident in Liberian villages like this one, where people don't understand why census workers have been chalking numbers on every house, lean-to, hut and shack.

"What do you think they want with my house?" says Monogo Kebeh, 70-year-old woman outside her mud hut.

The census is an exercise as old as the Roman Empire, but in a country that has not had a one for a quarter century it's anything but ordinary. For more than a year, over 9,000 census-takers have combed the densely forested nation mapping every structure. For three days starting Friday, they will revisit each dwelling and count the inhabitants.

The preparations, including the marking of dwellings, have given birth to rumors. Some wonder if its part of a military recruitment drive, a potent fear in a country where boys as young as 5 were handed machine guns and forced to fight. Others believe it's in preparation for new taxes.

France wrestles with euthanasia

PARIS (AP)—A woman with a rare tumor that had eaten away at her face is accomplishing in death what she could not do while alive: reviving the debate over euthanasia in France.

Chantal Sebire failed to convince a court to allow her to undertake a "doctor-assisted suicide" with a lethal dose of barbiturates to forever end her suffering. Her sudden death on Wednesday—two days after the court refused her request—brought calls to re-evaluate French law to assure the right to die.

"The demand to calm suffering is a legitimate demand," Justice Minister Rachida Dati said Thursday.

A French law adopted in 2005 allows terminally ill people to refuse treatment in favor of death but stops short of allowing active euthanasia.

Dati said the law needs to be revisited for "necessary adaptations" but other government ministers disagree, highlighting the difficulties raised in legislating an ethical issue.

Maharlika – PinoyNews

Philippine devotees nailed to the cross in Good Friday rites

SAN FERNANDO, Philippines (AP) — Philippine devotees re-enacted Jesus Christ's suffering Friday by having themselves nailed to crosses in rites frowned upon by church leaders in Asia's largest predominantly Roman Catholic nation.

Fernando Mamangon, 37, was among the first of some 30 men scheduled to go through

the Good Friday rites in three villages in northern Pampanga province's San Fernando city. Five other devotees, including a woman, were nailed to crosses in nearby Bulacan province.

It was Mamangon's 13th straight year for the rite, which penitents endure to fulfill a vow or pray for a cure for illnesses.

"I started having myself nailed to the cross in 1995 be-

cause my eldest son got sick and almost died," Mamangon, clad in a maroon robe with a crown of vines and thorns, said minutes before he was nailed to a wooden cross on a dusty mound in Santa Lucia village.

He said his eldest son was cured of complications from measles, but his 5-year-old son Alex still suffers from a stomach ailment.

On Wednesday, Archbishop Paciano B. Aniceto of San Fernando city urged devotees not to turn Holy Week into a "circus."

Aniceto said he has been telling penitents "to take time to thank God for the blessings and never use their devotion for tourism purposes."

The yearly tradition has become a tourist attraction, especially in San Fernando's San

Pedro Cutud village, which sometimes draws thousands of local and foreign tourists.

Aside from the cross nailings, scores of men pound their bleeding bare backs with bamboo sticks dangling from ropes in a flagellation rite meant to atone for sins.

Aniceto lamented that a surge of vendors and tourists has injected too much commercialism

into Holy Week celebrations.

But Mamangon vowed to continue with the practice handed down by his late father, who was nailed to the cross 15 times.

"After being nailed to the cross, I feel so refreshed, like all my sins are washed away," Mamangon said. "I will continue this until my son Alex is cured."

Arroyo OKs P1.5B to boost rice production

By JOEL GUINTO
INQUIRER.NET, ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANILA—President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has approved a P1.5-billion augmentation for the Department of Agriculture (DA) to increase rice production in the face of an "unprecedented" supply problem on the country's staple food, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said Wednesday.

The additional funds will be sourced from "realigning" the budget of select government agencies with "less absorptive capacity," and Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya is working on it, Yap said in a phone patch interview with reporters at the Palace.

"The President has approved augmentation budget for [rice] production, so we are expanding our wet season target areas, so the President has given P1.5 billion additional for seed support," Yap said.

Arroyo said Tuesday that rice prices were expected to rise, but promised there would be no shortage.

Yap said certified seeds instead of good seeds would be planted

in irrigated lands that were not reserved for hybrid rice.

Certified seeds can yield four and a half tons per hectare while good seeds yield three and a half tons per hectare. Hybrid rice seeds yield 6.5 tons per hectare, he said.

"This is very critical. The most important thing to do in the wet season is to distribute, as much as possible, certified seeds so that in

EXCHANGE RATES	
DOLLAR	PESO
\$1.00	= P41.62

the irrigated areas that will not be planted with hybrid rice, they can at least be migrated to certified seeds," he said.

Yap said the "thin" rice supply in the world market was putting pressure on local prices, unlike in 1995 when the country could import rice to address a "supply problem."

"What is happening right now is unprecedented," he said.

Yap refused to give an estimate on how much rice prices were expected to increase, saying he cannot "speculate" on market movements.

Yap said the plan called for the planting of an additional 600,000 hectares (1.5 million acres) of rice during the rainy season in the country's top 10 poorest provinces, and another 500,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) in other provinces. Harvests expected in the months ahead also will beef up supplies, he said.

Yap said the government's rice reserve would last 57 days and that the National Food Authority (NFA) was receiving additional supplies from the international market.

"We're going to get additional support," he said.

The NFA said it has secured 500,000 metric tons (551,155 tons) of rice from Vietnam and Thailand for delivery next month—part of 2.1 metric million tons (2.31 million tons) to be imported this year.

Rising demand from the Middle East and Africa has hiked the price of rice in Vietnam and Thailand—the world's top exporters—to up to US\$500 per metric ton, a 25 percent jump from a month ago, the Agriculture Department said.



A worker carries a sack of rice imported from Vietnam inside the warehouse of the National Food Authority in suburban Bicutan, south of Manila on Wednesday March 19, 2008.

LABOR FRONT

Filing a Labor case

By FERDIE P. DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Q: How does one file a labor case under the new CNMI labor law?

A: According to the new Alien Labor Rules and Regulations, any employer or employee may file a complaint with the Department of Labor's Administrative Hearing Office regarding any violation of the Commonwealth Employment Act of 2007, the Minimum Wage and Hour Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act; any breach of an approved employment contract, an approved health insurance contract, or any other document filed with Labor.

The Regulations state that each individual complainant shall file a separate complaint. Cases may be handled together, but complaints cannot cover the allegations of more than one complainant.

Q: Can a foreign national who did not enter the CNMI for employment such as a tourist file a complaint before Labor's Administrative Hearing Office?

A: No. According to the Regulations, persons who did not enter the Commonwealth for employment may pursue their claims in the CNMI courts.

An alien worker may file a complaint if he or she entered the CNMI for employment even if an incomplete application has been filed. The worker may also file a complaint even if his or her employment contract has not been ap-

proved, the employer never provided any job, the employment contract has been terminated, the employee has fallen into illegal status, the employee has been working illegally, the employee has violated Commonwealth law, or similar circumstances exist.

The Administrative Hearing Office will adjudicate all complaints of those who entered CNMI for employment regardless of when they entered or their current status in the Commonwealth.

Q: When does one file a Labor complaint?

A: The Regulations state that a complaint may be filed only after the violation or breach has occurred. Prior to filing an action in any Commonwealth court, a foreign national worker shall file a complaint with the Division of Labor so that remedies available under Commonwealth law may be considered expeditiously and potential violations may be investigated by the Labor director for the potential benefit of other similarly-situated workers.

Disclaimer: Readers should conduct their own research and due diligence and obtain professional legal advice. Saipan Tribune will not be liable for any loss or damage caused by a reader's reliance on information obtained from this section. Submit questions on labor issues to Saipan Tribune via e-mail at editor@saipantribune.com, or by calling 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747 and leaving a message at Ext. 133 or 135. You may also submit questions in person by writing it down and dropping it off at the Saipan Tribune's office on the second floor of the CIC Centre on Beach Road, Garapan.

GenSan execs prepare red carpet for Pacquiao

By AQUILES ZONIO
PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Setting aside politics, the city government has announced a red carpet welcome for Asian boxing sensation Manny Pacquiao.



Pacquiao, who grabbed the World Boxing Council Super featherweight title from Juan Miguel Marquez, is a political opponent of Mayor Pedro Acharon.

The boxer ran and lost in the 2007 congressional elections against Acharon party mate Darlene Custodio. Acharon and Pacquiao used to be close friends.

Ernesto Quisay, Acharon's chief of staff, said on Wednesday that the city government was preparing for Pacquiao's expected homecoming on March 24.

He said like the rest of the nation, officials and residents here were also excited to see Pacquiao home after his bout with Marquez.

Quisay said compared with previous homecoming events for Pacquiao, this would be "bigger" because he was now a world title-holder.

He said the Filipino ring idol would be met at the airport by a welcoming party led by city officials.

"There will be activities and presentations at the airport before (the) motorcade," he said.

Based on the plan, the motorcade will wind up at the Oval Plaza covered court here, where a welcome program and a press conference will be held.

Manny Pacquiao, of the Philippines, flexes his muscles during an official weigh-in ceremony at the Mandalay Bay hotel and casino in Las Vegas on Friday, March 14, 2008.

AP

RP landslide kills 3 as baby remains missing

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Police say a landslide has killed three people and that an infant boy remains buried in the rubble in the southern Philippine province of Davao del Sur.

Senior Superintendent Eleuterio Quilisadio says at least seven other people were injured in Thursday's landslide that buried two riverside houses in Santa Maria town.

The provincial police chief says rescuers are looking for 5-month-old Bobong Ali in the rubble, and that some of the child's relatives perished in the landslide. A report from Santa Maria police says the boy is 1 year old.

Quilisadio says three days of nonstop rain probably loosened soil on the hill above the two houses and that the area is prone to landslides.

Tubbattaha reef climbs to 28th spot in New Seven Wonders poll

By **ERWIN OLIVA**
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA—The Philippines' Tubbattaha Reef in the Sulu Sea is now ranked 28th in online voting for the New Seven Wonders of Nature.

Tubbattaha Reef is an atoll coral reef in the Philippines. It is now known as a marine sanctuary protected by government because of over 1,000 species, including endangered ones, found on the reef. These include manta rays, lionfish, tortoises, clownfish and sharks.

The opening of nominations for the New Seven Wonders of Nature was announced in Lisbon, Portugal in 2007.

As of March 19, Tubbattaha Reef has inched its way up to the 28th ranking, a position it held on February 14.

Bohol's Chocolate Hills is also fast catching up at 32nd, according to the New7Wonders website.

Bohol's Chocolate Hills is

a unique geological formation composed of around 1,268 perfectly cone-shaped hills, all about the same size, spread over an area of more than 50 square kilometers. The hills are covered in green grass that turns brown during the dry season, thus earning them the name "Chocolate Hills."

As of March 19, three natural wonders in Vietnam occupy the top three spots: the Ha Long Bay, the Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, and Fansipan Mountain also in Vietnam.

Online voters can choose from 77 official nominees for the New Seven Wonders of Nature after they register in the website. The live ranking is updated twice a day.

Voting will end on December 31, 2008, then a panel of experts will short-list 21 candidates from which voters worldwide will select the New 7 Wonders of Nature in 2009. The New Seven Wonders of Nature will be announced in 2010.

PMA top grad: I never said 'Makapal'

By **JULIE ALIPALA**
MINDANAO BUREAU

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Ariel "Bongbong" Rallos, who graduated on top of his class at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), on Wednesday admitted he stammered while delivering his valedictory address on Tuesday.

But Rallos said he never uttered the word "Makapal" while trying to pronounce the President's middle name.

"Seeing a lot of people I became conscious of their presence, I sort of lost my breath so instead of Macapagal, I uttered the word Macapag, took a deep breath, and added al," he told the Philippine Daily Inquirer by phone.

Rallos said he felt so nervous while delivering his valedictory address that he stuttered.

Hazel, Rallos' sister, said his brother's stammering never became an issue with Ms Arroyo.

She said during their conversation at the Presidential mansion, Ms Arroyo had understood that her brother has difficulty speaking in Filipino or other dialects.

"She spoke in Chavacano," she said referring to the dialect spoken by the people of this city.

Hazel said she and the family felt slighted by the Inquirer article about his brother's stammering on graduation day.

"I felt really bad, I don't know why some media make issue out of our difficulties especially in our speech," she said.

Councilor Rogelio Valesco Jr., a former television news anchor, said Chavacanos also have difficulty in pronouncing some letters in the Filipino or English alphabets.

"We Zamboanguenos have handicap especially in letters G, K, D and T," he said adding that "itlog is usually pronounced itlok while huwag becomes huwak."

Valesco said Rallos is not a public speaker so if he committed mistakes, people should readily forgive him.

"I do understand it's his first time to speak in the presence of hundreds of people and in front of our President. He was only overwhelmed by the crowd and stage freight," he said.

Court acquits Arroyo ally in murder case

By **LEILA SALAVERRIA**
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Former Occidental Mindoro Rep. Jose Villarosa Wednesday walked out of the Makati Medical Center a free man. He had been staying in the hospital since December after reportedly undergoing lung surgery.

Saying the mere confession of the gunman implicating Villarosa as one of those who planned the killing of brothers Paul and Michael Quintos was not enough, the Court of Appeals overturned his and three others' murder conviction handed down by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court in 2006.

Estelito Mendoza, Villarosa's counsel, said the acquittal of the four men was immediately executory.

In acquitting Villarosa, the appellate court said circumstances failed to show "an unbroken chain which leads one to fairly and reasonably conclude that accused-appellant Villarosa planned or authored the crimes."

"If a person is acquitted after trial, his presumption of innocence becomes conclusive because of the principle of double jeopardy..."

Those who are acquitted are completely free," Mendoza told the Philippine Daily Inquirer in a phone interview.

The appellate court's fifth division, in a decision penned by Justice Noel Tijam and dated March 18, ordered the release of Villarosa and "Mamburao 6" farmers Ruben Balaguer, Gelito Bautista and Mario Tobias.

The other members of the fifth division are Martin Villarama and Sesinando Villon.

Prison authorities officially released Villarosa from custody Wednesday afternoon, said Supt. Ramon Reyes, the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) officer in charge.

Conviction of 3 others upheld

The appellate court upheld the conviction of three other farmers, including that of Eduardo Hermoso whose confession had implicated the ex-lawmaker in the planning of the killings.

Hermoso, Manolito Matricio and Josue Ungsod were sentenced to reclusion perpetua (up to 40 years) for each count of murder and ordered to pay damages to Paul and Michael Quintos' heirs.

Because it was established

that the three had conspired to shoot the brothers, each of them should suffer a "three-fold penalty of reclusion perpetua for each count of murder," the appellate court added.

Sons of political rival

Paul and Michael were the sons of Villarosa's political rival Ricardo Quintos, who were slain in an ambush inside a friend's house in Mamburao town on Dec. 13, 1997. Michael was shot first by a group of gunmen, who followed him as he tried to escape from the house. Paul was later seen slain inside the same house.

Villarosa and a group of farmers known as the "Mamburao 6" were sentenced to death for the murders.

As for Ricardo Quintos' plan to question the acquittal in the Supreme Court, its spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez said such a petition could be filed based on the possible grave abuse of discretion on the lower court's part.

But Marquez said reversals of acquittals are not common.

Uncorroborated confession

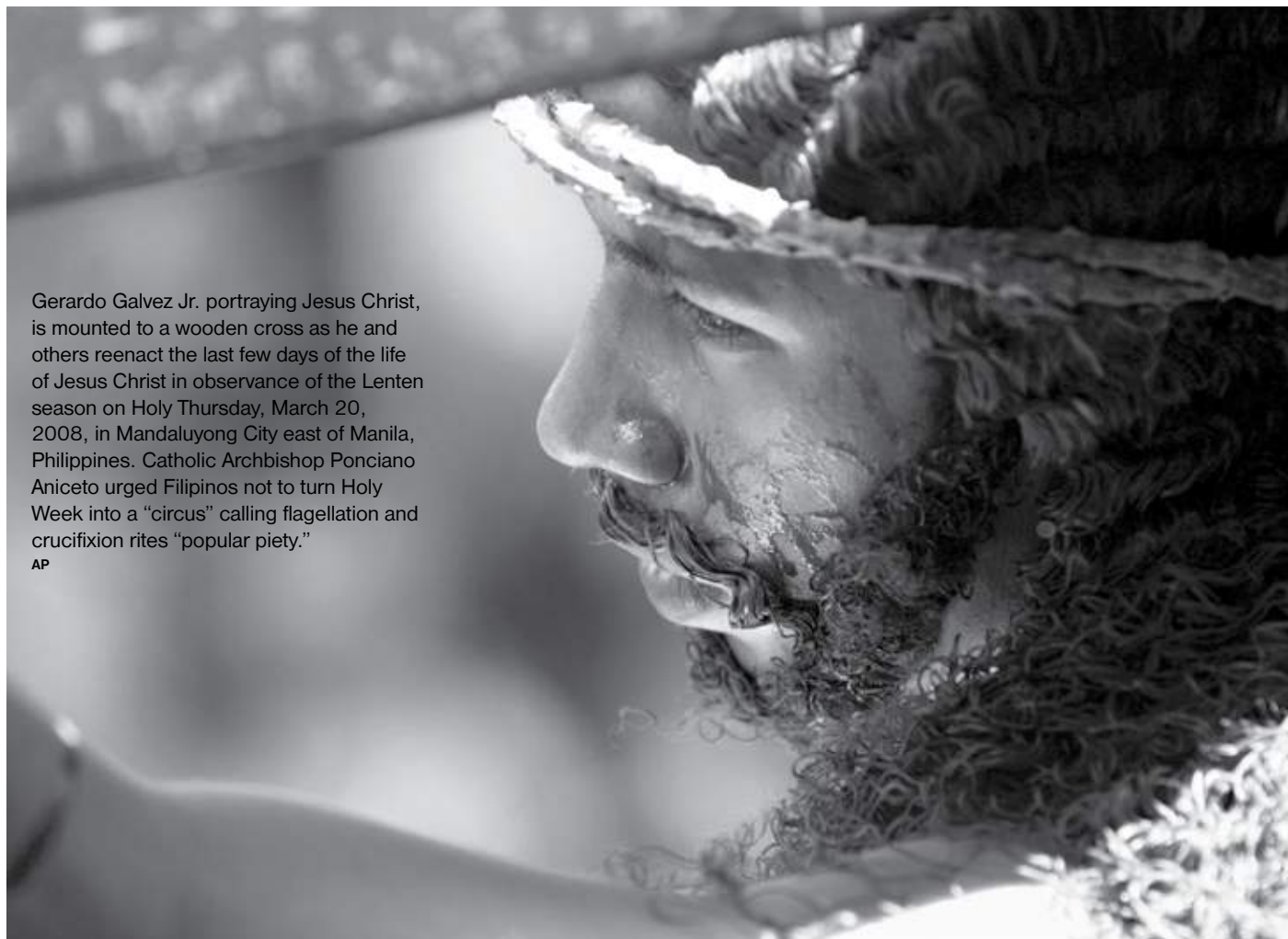
The court said Hermoso's extra-

judicial confession was not corroborated by any other evidence, hence it could not be used to pin Villarosa down.

The appellate court added that even the political rivalry between Villarosa and Quintos was not enough proof of the former's involvement in the crime. That Villarosa knew Matricio did not necessarily mean that the former lawmaker was involved in killing the brothers either.

Hermoso, in his confession, said that he was the gunman and that he was present in the Oct. 7, 1997 meeting where Villarosa discussed the killing of Michael. Hermoso later recanted the confession, however, and alleged that he was tortured by the National Bureau of Investigation to make the confession.

"The political dispute between Villarosa and Ricardo Quintos, or Villarosa's association with Matricio, did not place Villarosa in the conspiratorial meetings or at the scene of the crime. Indeed, the prosecution presented no independent physical or testimonial evidence that could connect Villarosa to the crime or its preparatory stages," the appellate court said.



Gerardo Galvez Jr. portraying Jesus Christ, is mounted to a wooden cross as he and others reenact the last few days of the life of Jesus Christ in observance of the Lenten season on Holy Thursday, March 20, 2008, in Mandaluyong City east of Manila, Philippines. Catholic Archbishop Ponciano Aniceto urged Filipinos not to turn Holy Week into a "circus" calling flagellation and crucifixion rites "popular piety."

AP

Bishop: Don't turn Holy Week into a circus

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A Catholic bishop urged Filipinos not to turn Holy Week into a circus with flagellation and crucifixion rites, while the health secretary said Thursday those who join the rituals should get tetanus shots to avoid infection.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of Filipinos crammed into bus depots and snarled traffic Thursday, as the nation began a four-day Easter holiday.

While many were headed to their hometowns or to beach re-

sorts, pilgrims also were flocking to villages where penitents gather every Good Friday to lash their backs with bamboo sticks or have themselves nailed to wooden crosses to re-enact Jesus Christ's sufferings.

While devotees see them as a way to atone for sins or fulfill vows for an answered prayer, the Lenten rituals are opposed by religious leaders in the Philippines—Southeast Asia's largest predominantly Roman Catholic nation.

On Wednesday, Archbishop

Paciano B. Aniceto of San Fernando city in Pampanga province urged devotees not to turn Holy Week into a "circus," calling flagellation and crucifixion rites "popular piety."

"There are penitents who personally see me explaining their devotion and I usually tell them not to do it for show," Aniceto said in a statement posted on the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' Web site.

On Thursday, Health Secretary Francisco Duque advised penitents to get tetanus shots

and sterilize nails used in the crucifixions to avoid infections.

"Our ERs are always open for them to be taken cared of," he added.

In preparation for the mass movement of people, police have put a 120,000-strong force on nationwide alert to beef up security and police visibility during the holiday.

Police and military personnel were also being deployed to bus terminals to assist passengers and keep watch for criminals and terrorists.

Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Paolo Bediones defends Miss RP-World winner

By DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA—So much has been written and said about Bb Pilipinas-World Janina San Miguel's comedy of errors during the pageant. If there's one person who has the right to size up Janina, it's pageant host Paolo Bediones who was right beside her when she fumbled. Here are Pao's sentiments about the much ballyhooed incident:

"When I called Janina San Miguel up to the front, I warned her up just like the rest with a simple question to reveal more of her personality and hopefully remove any nervousness. I asked if she felt any pressure considering she had just won best in swimsuit and long gown. She said that she felt no pressure to which I quipped sincerely 'Confident! Please choose a name of a judge!'—the whole time thinking to myself we have a winner here.

"Then it began..."

"No need transcribing it here since Youtube has over 300,000 hits by now of that fateful incident that will forever etch Janina's name in pageant history. The poor kid was lost in her thoughts amidst the thousands of people at the Araneta.

"Was she deserving of the crown? Based on the criteria for judging and the process the SGV implemented, the answer to that question is an emphatic yes. Beauty of face and figure comprised a total of 80 percent and remember she won both the long



Bb Pilipinas-World Janina San Miguel.

gown and swimsuit competition which leaves us with 20 percent to be divided evenly between personality and intelligence. Yes for this pageant, 10 percent for intelligence was all that was allotted."

Huge headstart

"So no matter how badly she may have performed in the Q&A, she couldn't have lost much considering she had a huge headstart in the scores.

"What now for Janina, the candidate who gained notoriety by simply being herself, the candidate who was able to eclipse national issues by uttering a

few grammatically incorrect phrases and the candidate who took home one of the coveted crowns? While many ridicule her and brand her undeserving I have but one thing to say: I admire her for not buckling under the pressure and for being as blatantly honest as possible.

"She wasn't pretending to be anything. Standing beside her, I could feel her sincerity to come up with a satisfactory answer despite the handicap she had in communicating effectively in English."

Feeling sorry

"Did I feel sorry for her? Yes, I

did. Do I feel sorry for her now? No. I am so excited to see how God will pull her out of this. She is now experiencing so much persecution that adults many years her senior would have difficulty facing. It's so easy for us to say 'we would have done better given the chance' but do we know for sure? Do we know what it feels like to be in front of thousands, watched by millions worldwide probably with the pressure knowing if we do well it could be the answer to lift our family out of its current economic state? Do we know what it feels like to be booed endlessly way after the pageant is over?

"At 17, Janina now knows the truth. Life can be cruel, but here's the good news: Train hard for the pageant, work on your skills and enhance your talents. Mabuhay ka, Janina San Miguel!"

'Killed' romance

Got swamped with e-mail from fans of Diether Ocampo and Kristine Hermosa. They are relieved that Oyo Boy Sotto's character in "Prinsesa ng Banyera" (his teleserye with Tintin) is now dead. The diehards are hoping the Oyo-Tin tandem will also be "killed" so Diet's real life romance with Tin would have a chance to "resurrect."

I cornered Diet about this. "Real gentlemen let silence speak," he said. "So silent I will remain."

If only Oyo and Tin can hear what Diet cannot say.

RUSHES

Brian steps out of his blog...

By the Inquirer Entertainment Staff
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA—The main protagonist in our ongoing online tele-novela steps out of the safety of his blog spot to talk to Rushes.

Australian Brian Gorrell, whose blogspot is now considered a cyber sensation, has e-mailed back answers to a Rushes questionnaire.

He is the man who has gone online, saying he only wants to recover \$70,000 from a Filipino ex-boyfriend, following a very public altercation.

The blog's subtitle says it all: "Fighting for Justice. Recovering My Life's Savings."

Sure beats hiring a private investigator. Think "Get Shorty" crossed with "Marimar."

Netizens who have been hooked on the site since it debuted on March 4 still have so many questions, so many opinions, it seems. (According to Gorrell, he received over 3,000 e-mails when he temporarily shut down the site on Wednesday night.)

Biggest among the queries: Who is Brian Gorrell and is he for real?

They believe so

Two respected media celebs (a TV host and a performer) think he is for real, citing his photos on the blog, as well as anecdotes passed on by people within the circle that Gorrell had been lambasting with unabashed relish online.

More interestingly, the other half of this nasty breakup has gotten in touch with Rushes as well, to say "No comment" in a cell phone conversation that lasted 19 minutes and 52 seconds.

In his blog spot, Gorrell said that he had been approached by "different media outlets for my story."

In the e-mailed interview, Gorrell said: "I have received e-mails from the BBC, CNN and other organizations for updates on this blog. It seems that this blog [has become] worldwide indeed."

He said that he has received e-mails from "New York, London, Mexico, Australia, Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong and, of course, the bulk is from the Philippines."

No scoffing matter

Over 100,000 visits per day and 3,412 e-mails from eight countries are no scoffing matter.

Why are Netizens so riveted?

Gorrell has a theory: "People read my blog for many reasons. The e-mails I receive are incredible and insightful. I've always said that [Filipinos] are the smartest people I've ever met. People pour out their feelings. Deep passionate feelings on the issue of class and other social [concerns]. They feel a huge disconnect from the characters in my blog."

PERSONAL FINANCE

Borrowing from relatives

Question: My wife and I have been dreaming of building our home and now seems to be a good time. However, we are a bit short and we are considering borrowing money from my parents. They have helped us before for some emergency needs. We were thinking that if we borrowed from them, we would not only save on interest, but we can also pay back anytime without fears of incurring penalties. What do you think?—Gerry N.

Answer: There's nothing like coming home to your own abode after a long day's work and having dinner with your family at the dinner table, and this is a good time to build a home given the real estate boom in the country. It's a buyer's market and there are a lot of real estate developments going up in very good locations, so you'll have many choices to choose from.

But building a home isn't that easy. Aside from the cost of the land and construction, you also need to factor in real estate taxes, building permits, interior design services, and home insurance, among other things. Have you calculated how much you will be paying in effect every month to cover all costs as your home is being

built? No doubt it will be high.

This is why almost every new family goes for financing to build their starter home. Banks offer housing loans at market interest rates. You can also tap housing loans through Pag-Ibig Fund, the Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System for even better terms.

Some real estate developers offer in-house financing too. However, their terms may be steeper.

Whether you're going for a bank loan or in-house financing from the developer, you'll be required to put in collateral, which is more often than not, the property you are building.

Although we should not get into any loan without calculating if we can afford the monthly payments, some people find themselves in hot water as they realize they can't keep up with the monthly payments. This is why it may make sense to borrow from parents and other relatives from whom you can get loans interest-free, collateral-free and with easy long payment terms.

But is it advisable to borrow from one's parents?

There are many issues to consider. Below are some of them:

1. Your own parents' needs.

It may look like they can spare the money now, but your parents have to set aside money for their own retirement and health care expenses that may arise in the future. If they haven't built up their retirement funds, then this should be their priority, rather than helping you. They may not have many years left to earn as you do, thus they should be setting aside money now for their re-

tirement. Otherwise, when they are old and grey, they may depend on you for their day-to-day expenses—and this may in turn cause other issues, such as low self-esteem on their part and resentment on your family's part.

2. Lost income.

If your parents will lend money to you at no interest, they will lose much needed income they would otherwise get by investing the money to be lent to you. Even if they just put it in a time deposit, a mutual fund or unit investment trust fund and forget about it, this money may earn just by being there. And this income could have been put to better use, such as medicines, paying for house repairs or saving for retirement.

3. Emotional issues.

Borrowing from your parents may bring up emotional issues, such as feelings of favoritism and resentment on the part of your siblings, and feelings of guilt on your part should you be unable to pay off the loan. Since you are their child, your parents may also have a hard time saying no to your request for a loan even if they may not want to or cannot afford to. And in case you are unable to pay off the loan, this may be held as a grudge against you.

4. Independence issues.

"The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender," says Proverbs 22:7 in the Bible. Even if you are a grown man already, by borrowing from your parents, your parents may think they are entitled to meddle in your affairs

and make decisions for you.

No doubt, there is more to borrowing from relatives than just getting a loan. We advise you to think hard before going this route. Maybe you should hold off building a home until you have built up the capacity to pay off a loan you would otherwise get from a bank.

But should you have no other option but to borrow from your parents while you are building your home, here are some suggestions you may want to follow:

1. Keep the amount as small as possible. Don't ask for a big amount to ensure that you will be able to pay off the loan and to make sure that this will not affect your parents' income stream for their day-to-day living.

2. Put it all in writing. Be professional about it and write out a document detailing the amount of loan, interest if any, collateral if any, and terms of payment.

3. Inform your siblings. This will douse out any feeling of favoritism on the part of your parents.

4. Be prompt in paying.

INQUIRER.net and Citibank invite readers to ask questions regarding financial matters. Send your questions to personal_finance@inquirer.net. Readers are solely responsible for their own investment decisions and should thus conduct their own research and due diligence and obtain professional advice. INQUIRER.net will not be liable for any loss or damage caused by a reader's reliance on information obtained from our web site.

Maharlika – Opinyon

EDITORIAL

Un-holy week

MANILA—Here's an unequivocal sign of the times: Even on the holiest days of the Christian calendar, political thoughts continue to intrude. The body politic must be seriously ill, and not even the Filipino faithful's hallowed Holy Week traditions can dull the pain.

In part, this is because of the seeming lack of unity of purpose among the country's Catholic bishops. For the first time in the history of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, prelates are openly taking directly contrary positions on public issues; that is to say, they are perceived to be publicly addressing and countering each other.

The CBCP itself seems to be struggling with an unresolved inner tension; less than a month after issuing a pastoral letter sharply contrasting the concerns of Metro Manila with the concerns of the provinces, it issued a second letter recognizing that the entire country, under the weight of allegations of corruption and systematic lying, was in fact facing "a crisis of truth."

Only last Sunday, a group of 16 bishops from the Metropolitan Ecclesiastical Province of Manila issued another pastoral letter. It takes a theological tin ear or deliberate ignorance of the Catholic Church's social doctrine to mistake the statement as an unqualified endorsement of the Arroyo administration—but the latest letter may have only succeeded in adding to the laity's growing confusion.

Political thoughts intrude into the Holy Week also because food prices are going up, and in the last several days rice has become increasingly scarce. Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap has assured the public that, while prices are indeed rising, supply remains adequate. But it is a measure of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's legitimacy crisis that Yap himself faces a credibility test. His statements have been met with suspicion.

To be sure, public skepticism is also fueled by turmoil in the global markets; oil prices have reached an all-time high, the dollar is under severe strain, the prospect of corporate failures is unsettlingly high. But on top of all these, the administration's credibility problem at a time of serious allegations of corruption and betrayal of public trust is a grave concern. The question is not only about the capacity of the administration to level with the people about the looming food emergency; it is also about the readiness of both the administration and its critics, at a time of political instability, to play politics with rice.

We are all waiting for the other shoe to drop. Who will be the next witness, the next whistle-blower, to hammer away at the public's complacency? What will the bishops say, when they meet again in a plenary session in July? Questions like these interfere with the faithful's Holy Week reflections. We can only hope that, in the economy of salvation, it is a necessary interference.

Philippine Daily Inquirer

Healer, heal thyself

There's no truth to the rumor that the Pastoral Letter read in churches last Sunday titled "Towards a Morally Rebuilt Nation" carried the parenthetical comment "Joke lang." But for many Filipino Christians and/or churchgoers, it might as well have done so. It sounds more like "Tolerating a Morally Bankrupt Regime."

While the Letter, signed by Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales and 15 Metro Manila bishops, indicts corruption in strenuous terms, it is also strenuously vague about whom it indicts. "Bahala na si Batman," as the kids say. It calls into question the "integrity of all, the accuser and the accused" and as a way out of it calls on all leaders "from the highest to the lowest to give examples of repentance and true humble conversion." Naturally both the administration and opposition are pointing to each other as the objects of the diatribe or admonition.

Just as well, the Letter calls into question the protest actions to oust Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, warning against "the convenient streets as the easier route to an imagined freedom." Naturally, too, spokesperson Anthony Golez has seized on it. He is one of those people with an immense talent for spotting small things and missing big ones, for seeing Jun Lozada's minor bukols and being blind to his boss' advanced cancer.

I do agree with the Pastoral Letter in two respects. One is that true enough we may not ignore as well the rottenness of some of those currently fighting Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Nor may we allow them to go scot free later on simply because they helped end her reign of terror. Jose de Venecia and Erap are chief of them, though Erap has at least done some time for it. Some of the X-Men (and Women), as I mentioned yesterday, were also involved in scams, not least of them the Peace Bonds. None of this may mean the current regime shouldn't be removed, it simply means this band of crooks may not replace it.

Two is that the streets can be an easy route to freedom. I disagree though with the way the bishops phrase it. There is nothing imagined about the

freedom that Edsa brings, particularly at its climax when you see the person who has made life a living hell for you, who has destroyed everything that is good in your community, bound in chains and being led to the gallows, if only figuratively. It is not only real, it is biblical. The sigh of relief, the feeling of renewal and the sense of purpose that spring up are real and palpable and can be felt by the faintest of hearts.

If the bishops had warned against seeing the streets as the route to complete freedom, I'd buy it. The problem is not that the freedom is imagined, the problem is that it is incomplete. It's just the beginning, not the end. The point is not to warn against People Power, it is to warn against imagining the work of People Power is done after a tyrant is felled. Democracy, as its founding founders kept emphasizing, demands eternal vigilance. For us it means the people should continue to exercise their power to make sure a new and better world, and not the same or more rotten one, is built in its place.

As for the rest of the Letter, well, I wouldn't be surprised if it sparks a dramatic decline in church-going, if not in the number of, Christians in this country.

The notion that everyone is a sinner is not an insight, it is a tautology. Of course everyone has sinned at some time or another. But there are sins and sins. Some sins are of the order of Mary Magdalene's, others are of the order of Sodom and Gomorrah's. Mary Christ forgave, Sodom and Gomorrah God destroyed. Guess what order is the sin of someone who has stolen votes, lives and hopes. Even heaven weighs sins differently and punishes them accordingly. Only our bishops cannot, or will not.

The Letter's position here merely reminds me of something one bishop said some years ago, which was to ask why we should fuss unduly over Arroyo cheating in the 2004 elections when "everyone cheats anyway." As astonishing a view of life as you can find from one who holds a moral scepter. At the very least, there is cheating and cheating: Not everyone calls up a Comelec official in the middle of counting to dictate a particular result. At the very most, if it's

Road show discord

MANILA—The ambivalent Palm Sunday pastoral letter issued by the bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Manila led by Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, denouncing corruption in government but warning against removing President Macapagal-Arroyo from office, has left millions of the lay constituency of the Philippine Catholic Church without clear ethical direction regarding political action as they meditate on this issue during the Holy Week.

Although the religious holidays have given Filipinos a respite from the nearly one hundred hours accumulated over 12 hearings in the Senate during the past six months on the corruption allegations over the cancelled \$329-million contract on the proposed national broadband network project with China's ZTE corporation, they remain confounded over the split in the Catholic hierarchy on whether to back mounting civil society demands for the resignation of the president. This inquiry has taken a toll on Church solidarity and this fissure has surfaced not only in the pastoral letter but also in the apparently waning enthusiasm of the hierarchy for the long-running testimony of Rodolfo Lozada Jr., principal witness in the alleged kickback offers over the transaction.

Lozada had gone on a road show of speaking tours in Cebu City, Bacolod City and Iloilo City, but the small turnout at the mass planned in Cebu in support of Lozada has proved a disappointment to backers of Lozada in the civil-society-based Black and White Movement, which blamed this on lack of support from Cebu's Ricardo Cardinal Vidal. The Movement denounced Vidal as a "congressman in a cassock." It claimed the cardinal had banned Cebu priests from saying a "Mass for the Truth" at Lozada's appearances. Vidal's spokesman, Msgr. Achilles Dacay, denied there was such a "ban" and demanded "proof," and the B&W Movement insisted that the proof consisted of the fact that "not a single priest has accepted the invitation to say Mass."

"The Cardinal has used his influence to discourage

Cebuanos from meeting Lozada, listening to him and judging him," the Movement said.

Several bishops have refused to use their pulpits as political platforms against President Arroyo. Among them is Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi of Nueva Caceres. He has ordered priests in Camarines Sur to refrain from celebrating mass with Lozada, who is planning to visit on March 24 and 25. Legaspi told the Church-based station Radio Veritas: "I told our priests that they should not allow the Mass to be used for political rallies."

The lack of solidarity in the hierarchy and an authoritative direction from the highest ecclesiastical leadership, represented by the Archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Rosales, on the question of whether to support street campaigns to remove the President has allowed the government to deepen the divisions in the hierarchy to play the opposing tendencies against one another and has caused administration critics to charge the hierarchy with being soft on the government, with its series of pastoral letters straddling the fence on what political action to take on the issues raised by the corruption scandals.

On February 26, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, to the dismay of the opposition, issued a statement that strongly condemned the "continuing culture of corruption from the top to the bottom of our society," but they refused to call for the removal or resignation of President Arroyo.

Instead, they called for "communal action" in the search of truth, with the President leading in that action. The term "communal action" left the faithful confused over what the bishops meant. The statement warned that another people power would only "weaken our political institutions." The bishops also called for the abolition of Executive Order 464, which had been criticized as preventing Cabinet officials from testifying before congressional investigations on grounds of executive privilege. EO 464 has subsequently been lifted by the President.

That statement split the bishops, with the result that

THERE'S THE RUB

By **CONRADO DE QUIROS**
Philippine Daily Inquirer



true that everyone cheats, then the point is to stop it, not to encourage it. The point is to say, "It's time we did something about it," not "It's time we moved on." The point is to punish everyone who cheated, not to reward all of them. The point is to say, "A plague on both your houses," not "God's blessings on both your heads." The point is to bring down both their houses, not to keep them standing.

Discernment is not an impediment to action, it is a guide to action. You see a woman being raped, you raise an alarm; you do not sit by and meditate on the relative value of chastity. The latter is not the path to discernment, it is a signpost to a mental institution. The bishops need not look far to see a sublime example of discernment guiding action. Jesus Christ himself, in whose name the bishops claim to speak: when he saw how his temple was being defiled, he flew into a rage and overturned tables shouting, "My temple is a house of prayer, but you have made it into a den of thieves."

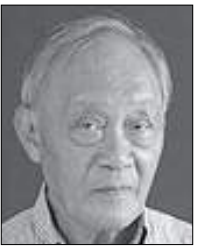
You see God's temple being turned into a den of thieves and you say, "Let us all repent"? That may be many things but that is not Christian.

The bishops say everyone must repent because the seventh commandment (Thou shalt not steal) "applies to all as individuals or as groups. Thus, if one holds on to money or its equivalent that is not his or hers, justice demands restitution or bribe money to the owner."

OK. Now please return the money you got from Malacañang. To us, the taxpayers, not to Malacañang. That is not Malacañang's money, that is ours.

ANALYSIS

By **AMANDO DORONILA**
Philippine Daily Inquirer



in order to provoke another split, the Manila province issued the Holy Week pastoral letter that muted the national hierarchy's divisions over how to address the corruption issues. The impasse in the Senate investigation has put increasing pressure on the Senate to terminate the inquiry and draft a joint report by the three committees investigating the cases. Some senators have claimed that after six months of hearing, the inquiry has now received sufficient evidence to draft a report, but new developments are working against an early closure of the inquiry. The NBN-ZTE case has opened new facets beyond the corruption allegations, expanding the controversy to the issue of the joint exploration agreement between the Philippines, China and Vietnam of the marine and mineral resources in disputed territories in the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

While the territorial issues are beyond the immediate concerns of the Catholic Church, the bishops cannot escape being entangled in the call from their constituency for direction on matters concerning political action to put pressure on the government to end the corruption scandals.

The question that has remained unresolved and will be unresolved after Easter is: Has the legislative investigation produced sufficient evidence that would enable the lay community to make their own judgment independent of the pastoral letters of their bishops. The pastoral letters are on the line. Are the bishops out of touch with the mood of their flock?

Maharlika – Samu’t Sari



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
Thousands of Filipino Catholic devotees fall in line to touch the statue of Christ.



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
GOOD FRIDAY TREK
Filipinos touch the base of the statue of Christ to offer their prayers.



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
Filipino band members gather for a photo upon reaching the top of the mountain.



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
Lala Torrevillas, Christy Villafior, Anna Alvarez, Hazel Marinas and Jasmin May Cordova hike to the top of Mt. Tapochau on Good Friday.



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
MOVER president Ernest Maicle, Lolit Velasco and other devotees fall in line on the stairs heading towards the statue of Christ.



Members of different Filipino organizations gather at the foot of the mountain in observance of Good Friday.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



Teddy Orbeta, Garry Ting, Obet Aquilar, and Ferdie Santos participate in Saipan's traditional observance of Good Friday.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
Vivian Bernardo, Bettina Fuertes and Gilbert Canero hike toward the peak of Mt. Tapochau early morning of Good Friday.



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
Herman's bakery staff Joel Basal and JR Aguilar take a breather after a long hike toward the peak of Mt. Tapochau.

Youngstyle

Kitemaker soars to magical heights

By **BRENNA MALONEY**
© 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Stability, agility, strength, color—all qualities that make for a winning kite, says master kite-builder Jon Burkhardt. He should know—he has been making and flying kites for nearly 30 years. With the Smithsonian's 42nd annual kite festival coming up on March 29, Burkhardt shared some of his secrets with KidsPost.

Burkhardt's Potomac, Md., workshop is an explosion of color. Kites of every size and shape hang from the ceiling and on the walls.

The room is crowded and well-stocked with interesting things used to produce his magical kites: rolls of sailcloth in lots of colors, a wood-burning tool to seal cloth edges when cut, hand-carved kite-winders made from wood found in his yard, bobbins of thread and a home-made glass-topped desk with a light underneath to help him view a kite's colors. In the corner is a sewing machine with a kite in progress on it.

Burkhardt's passion for kites was fueled long ago by an Indiana man named Ansel Toney, who lived near Burkhardt's parents. Toney had become a legend in the kite world, having taken up the craft when he was older.

"He began seriously making kites when he was 89," Burkhardt says. "He was turning out a dozen 12-foot Delta kites a week on a treadle (foot-powered) sewing machine, cutting his own spars out of Indiana basswood. I don't think I had ever seen anyone so much alive. I said, 'Hey, this guy has found the secret of youth.'"

After spending time with Toney, Burkhardt was hooked.

How many kites has he made? "Not as many as I'd like," he says with enthusiasm. "I've gotten such pleasure from kites. No matter who you are, there is something in kite-flying that appeals to everyone."

Icarus was the kite that started it all for Burkhardt in 1979.

"I was in Wisconsin," Burkhardt says, "and I went to a kite shop and bought a kite that was a representation of the story of Icarus. It's got a lot of neat colors. It was \$50. And every woman in my life gave me (a hassle) for spending \$50 on a kite."

In Greek mythology, Icarus and his father, Daedalus, were imprisoned by King Minos. To escape, Daedalus made wings for himself and his son, using feathers and wax. He warned Icarus not to fly too close to



Two kites by craftsman Jon Burkhardt, of Potomac, Md. From top, a 4-Line Kite (also known as a stunt kite), a maneuverable and versatile flyer; and White Bird Kite, which has an open and tapered keel, and curved wings created by using fishing rods, which makes it "a little dicey" to fly, he admits.

THE WASHINGTON POST



Stability, agility, strength, color are qualities that make for a winning kite, says Jon Burkhardt, of Potomac, Md., who has been building and flying kites for nearly 30 years. With the Smithsonian's 42nd annual kite festival coming up on March 29, Burkhardt shared some of his secrets.

THE WASHINGTON POST

TO LEARN MORE

American Kitefliers Flyers Association: www.aka.kite.org.

Maryland Kite Society: www.mdkites.org.

For Supplies

■ Hang-em High Fabrics, Richmond, Va.: 804-233-6155.

■ Into the Wind: www.intothewind.com.

■ Kite Studio: www.kitebuilder.com.
(© 2008, The Washington Post)



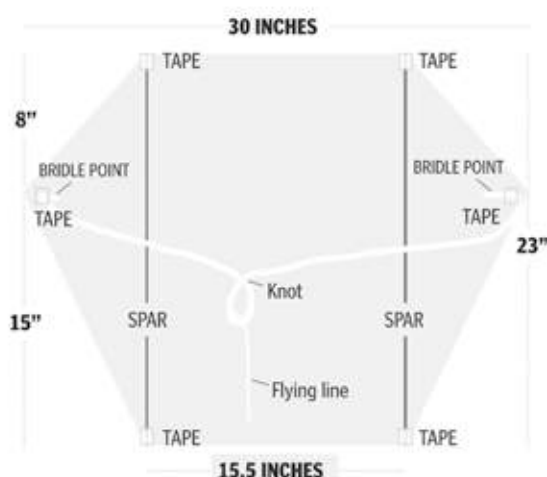
THE WASHINGTON POST

Master kite-builder Jon Burkhardt's Potomac, Md., workshop is an explosion of color. Kites of every size and shape hang from the ceiling and on the walls.

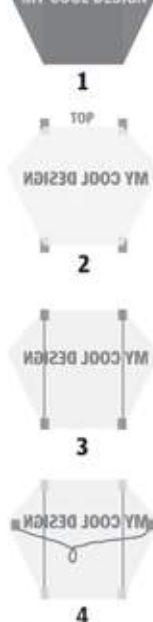
How to Make a Sled Kite

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- 1 kitchen-size trash bag, preferably white. (Brown wrapping paper, craft paper or Tyvek also can be used.)
- 2 wooden dowels
- About 100 feet of kite string
- Packaging tape and scissors
- Colorful permanent markers



MY COOL DESIGN



1: Using dimensions at lower left, cut the kite face from the trash bag and decorate with markers.

2: Lay the kite **face-down** on a table, with the top farthest from you. Attach four 2-inch strips of tape to the kite face, as shown. About half of each strip should hang over the edge.

3: Lay one stick on each side, with the tips touching the corners. **Fold over** the tape to hold the stick ends to the kite back.

4: Create a bridle, using a piece of string about eight feet long. Lay two to three inches of each end of the string on the two bridle points and tape to the back. Find the center of the bridle, tie a knot and attach your flying line. Let's fly!

Know the Basics

Bridle and flying line: Help control the kite. Where and how the bridle is attached determines whether a kite will fly. A good flying line needs to be strong so the wind doesn't break it, but light enough for the kite to fly.

Kite covering (or face): Like a sail, its job is to catch the wind.

Frame: Made of sticks or poles called **spars**, it keeps the kite stiff.

Tail: Provides stability by keeping the kite properly positioned in the wind.

GRAPHICS BY BILL WEBSTER — THE WASHINGTON POST

Ready to play at the toy fair

By SCOTT MOORE
© 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

TThere were more than 100,000 playthings on display at Toy Fair in New York City last month, and somebody had to check them all out. (We know—lucky!) Kids weren't allowed in, but KidsPost was there for you, sorting through about 7,000 new toys and games to find the hottest, the coolest and the most awesome things coming out this year.

Air Hogs Zero Gravity Micro, \$30, ages 8 and up

A radio-controlled car that races up walls and even on the ceiling. By Spin Masters. Available in fall.

Ruin, about \$30, ages 8 and up

A ruthless version of Sorry in which players can change the game board on every turn. By Buffalo Games.



H2Go, about \$130, ages 10 and up

A hydrogen-powered, radio-controlled car that zooms up to 6 miles per hour and will run 8 to 10 minutes. It takes just seconds to power up. The solar-powered charger also will work with other electronics. By Corgi. Available in fall.



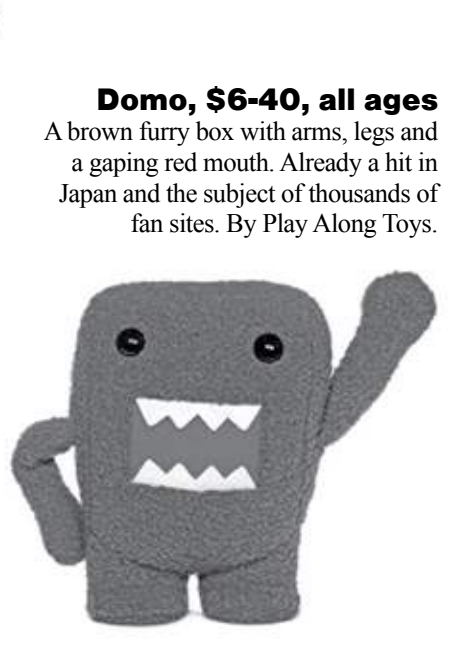
Earthopoly, \$25, ages 8 and up

An eco-friendly Monopoly-like game with pieces made from bamboo, lima beans, black walnut, crystals, shells and glass. By Late for the Sky.



Struts, \$15, ages 6 and up

Plastic ponies! With fashion accessories! What's not to like? By PlayMates.



Domo, \$6-40, all ages

A brown furry box with arms, legs and a gaping red mouth. Already a hit in Japan and the subject of thousands of fan sites. By Play Along Toys.

Slap Wacky!, \$12, ages 7 and up

Frantic five-minute card game in which players rush to put together shape patterns and claim points. By Morning Star Games.



Me2, \$35, ages 8 and up

A 3-D, 360-degree video game powered by you. Your onscreen avatar's strength and accessories depend on how much activity you log with a pedometer. Want to buy a virtual-world jet ski? That will cost you about 2,500 steps in the real world. By IToys. Available in August.



HEXBUG, \$10, ages 8 and up

Micro robotic creatures respond to sound and sense when obstacles are in front of them. Crab and inchworm models are due later this year. By Innovation First.

Dazzle It, about \$20, ages 7 and up

Add charms to your clothes without puncturing the fabric or getting locked into one design. Part of a Girl Zone line of craft kits that replicate the look of fashion magazines. By IToys. Available in August.

Comic Book Creator 2, \$50, ages 10 and up

Making your own comic book has never been easier—you don't even have to draw. One version allows you to make your life story or scrapbook in comic book form. Others, with licensed tie-ins, let you create comics with Speed Racer or Marvel superheroes. Print your finished product or post it

on the Internet. By Planetwide Media.

You Gotta Be Kidding!, \$25, ages 7-12

A gross card game of "would you rather..." with interesting but unappealing choices. Would you rather eat a bucket of apple stems or 20 banana peels? By Zobmondo.

Exago, \$30, ages 9 and up

Place four of your tiles in a row to win in this latest family game from a Holland-based company that also makes Rolit and Tayu. By Goliath Games. Available in spring.

Bob, \$80, adults

One accessory you might not be happy to have in your house. Parents can program time limits (when and how much) for plugged-in electronic devices. Go outside the boundaries and Bob will turn off the screen. By Hopscotch Technology. Available at www.usebob.com.

DEATH & FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

In Loving Memory of

DANIEL JOSEPH O'CONNOR III

Better Known As: Dan

Born to Life on December 10, 1948.
Daniel was called by his Creator
on March 14, 2008

In paradise, he will join his
Father: Daniel Joseph O'Connor II

Survived by:
Wife: Emma R. O'Connor
Mother: Louise O'Connor
Brother: Paul O'Connor
Daughter: Mary Elizabeth O'Connor
Stepson: Jemmeniel Recorte

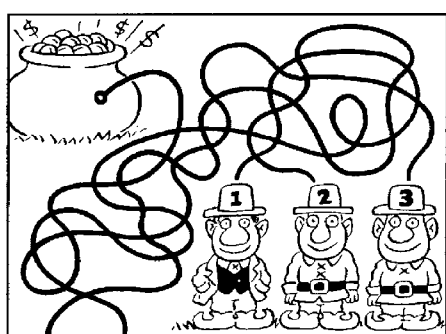
Dan also leaves behind numerous friends and he will be greatly missed by his PTI family and friends.

Nightly rosary is being prayed at 6:00 p.m. at the family residence in Susupe behind Calvo's Nursery. Viewing will be held on Monday, March 24, 2008 from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at San Jose Parish. His remains will be flown to the Philippines Tuesday morning.

Your presence and prayers are appreciated.

Emma O'Connor & Family



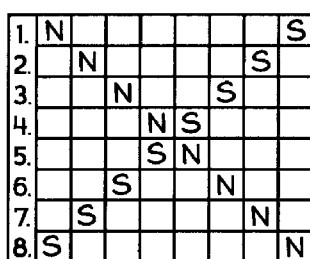


GET RICH QUICK! You have one chance to catch the leprechaun that will lead you to the gold.

Answer: The third leprechaun.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



FIND THE BIG WORDS!

Using the definitions and the anagrams below, find the eight, eight-letter words that fit into the framework pictured on the left. For each definition, the letters in the two anagram words must be unscrambled and used to form the word asked for.

DEFINITIONS:

1. Tied with knots.
2. Charge for a loan.
3. What an artist uses.
4. Frontier cap.
5. Sweet, white root veggies.
6. Bed for an infant.
7. What a convict thinks of.
8. A young onion.

ANAGRAM:

tics + knee
stir + teen
vase + scan
nick + soon
pins + spar
tabs + sine
pace + sign
soil + clan

MATHEMATICAL RIDDLES!

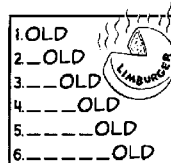
1. What's the definition of a polygon?
2. What did the acorn say when it grew up?



Answers: 1. A dead parrot (what else?) 2. It said, "Geometry!" ("Gee! I'm a tree!")

A CHEESY WORD TEST! As this puzzle gets "older," all of the words get progressively longer, and they all end in OLD. Use the following definitions:

1. OLD (in place).
2. What you do to laundry.
3. To criticize openly.
4. To keep from sinking.
5. What climbers look for.
6. Used when cleaning buildings



Answers: 1. Old 2. Fold 3. Scold 4. Uphold 5. Toehold 6. Scaffold

Answers: 1. Neckties 2. Interest 3. Canvases 4. Coonskin 5. Parsnips 6. Bassinet 7. Escaping 8. Scallion

Strange BUT TRUE

By SAMANTHA WEAVER

■ It was Academy Award-nominated actress and comedian Lily Tomlin who made the following observation: "Ninety-eight percent of the adults in this country are decent, hard-working, honest Americans. It's the other lousy 2 percent that get all the publicity. But then—we elected them."

■ During Elizabethan times, it was customary in England for a wife to wear her wedding ring on her thumb.

■ Have you ever heard of Jasper Daniel? Probably not by that name—he's better known today as Jack Daniel, thanks to the whiskey that bears his name. He was the youngest of 10 kids, which may explain a lot: Being picked on by nine older siblings could drive anyone to drink.

■ Those who study such things say that people during the Stone Age used shells and even shark teeth to shave.

■ Other than the fact that they're all performers, what do Darryl Hannah, Telly Savalas, James Doohan and Jerry Garcia have in common? They are (or were) missing one finger.

■ In ancient Greece, honey was often used to embalm corpses.

■ If you're ever in South Carolina in November, you might want to stop by the tiny town of Salley and check out the annual Chitlin Strut festival. (For those of you who didn't grow up in the Deep South, chitlins are hog intestines that are boiled until tender, then battered and deep-fried.) The smell is truly awful, yet every year thousands of people descend upon Salley to sample this Southern delicacy.

■ Tony Curtis, who co-starred with Marilyn Monroe in the famous film "Some Like It Hot," once said that kissing Ms. Monroe was "like kissing Hitler." Makes you wonder how he knew what kissing Hitler was like.

Thought for the Day: "Nothing is illegal if a hundred businessmen decide to do it." —Andrew Young

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MAGIC MAZE • PASSED AWAY IN 2007

Y E B Y V S P M J H E B B Y V
T Q O P N O S N H O J L I G
D E B A Y I A R R I H C S W T
R P Y V M K S I I S Y N H F D
B Y P A W U Z T L E Y S O Q O
M K O R F Z I A L D F D P B Z
X W S O U Y W S E E S W U S Q
O N T T L L M R W I Y J H F D
C A O T L L Y M L M W V T S Q
P K N I E V E L A N L K I H F
E C B H B Z S N F T E L U O G

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Bill Walsh Helmsley Rizzuto Tammy Faye
Bishop Knievel Schirra Wyman
Falwell Pavarotti Sills Yeltsin
Goulet Poston Snyder

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★ ★ ★

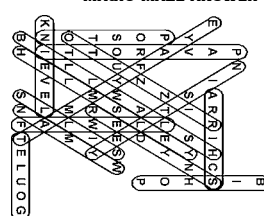
★ Moderate ★ ★ Difficult
★ ★ ★ GO FIGURE!

	÷		+		13
+		+		-	
	-		x		12
÷		x		x	
	+		÷		3
3		27		8	

1 2 3 4 4 5 6 8 9

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MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



PASSED AWAY IN 2007

GO FIGURE ANSWER

8	27	3
8	÷	9
3	+	3
x	x	÷
12	x	2
-	6	-
8	+	4
+	1	÷
5		

Snoozing cats

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: Why do cats sleep so much? —Jan B., San Diego

DEAR JAN: No one knows, exactly. Many studies have been done, but researchers haven't decided on an exact reason. It is known that, like us, cats need sleep to stay healthy and that their bodies follow biological rhythms, such as the circadian rhythm (the 24-hour sleep/awake cycle).

Here are some facts about sleeping cats:

■ Cats sleep an average of 16 hours per day—though not all at once.

■ In kittens, growth hormone is released only when they sleep.

■ Cats are most active around dawn and dusk, and least active in the middle of the night.

■ Older cats tend to sleep more during the day and less at night.

So, how can you help your cat stay healthy? Let it sleep. Younger cats may not mind so much if they are awakened by a human who wants to play, but they will disappear a little later to finish their nap. Older cats could be very put out by being suddenly awakened—cranky and disoriented—so let them sleep. Of course, there are a few things to watch for, such as a cat that seems lethargic be-



tween sleep periods, or sleeps an excessively long time.

Most cats roam the house for a few hours each night, hunting, playing and meowing a bit, but if a cat is extremely restless or meows plaintively for a long time at night, something could be amiss. Excessive meowing often signals loneliness or distress, and is most often heard from kittens and senior cats. But any significant change in sleep habits, energy and nighttime activities should be monitored and discussed with your cat's veterinarian.

Send your tips, questions and comments to Paws Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

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Tulip art—from egg cartons

Stop. Don't toss those cardboard egg cartons away after dying dozens of Easter eggs. Save them up, and on a rainy afternoon when you're wondering what to do indoors, create a blooming bouquet of tulips to celebrate spring. In fact, these colorful flowers can be enjoyed in a bouquet just about anytime and anywhere! Mine is arranged in a shiny, empty soup can to brighten my office year-round.

All you need for a bouquet of a dozen blooms are the following items:

- 1 empty cardboard egg carton
- Poster or acrylic paints
- Paintbrush or sponge brush
- 12 long, thick pipe cleaners
- Small buttons or beads that can be threaded on the pipe cleaner
- Shiny recycled, clean tin can for a "vase"

First, remove the lid of the egg carton. Paint the base. For a multicolored bouquet, paint the individual cups different colors. Let dry.

Cut out each cup to create a tulip bloom, rounding off the edges. Cut zig-zag edges to resemble flower petals. Touch up each bloom with more paint.

Poke a hole in the center of each egg-cup flower. For a stem, insert a pipe cleaner through the hole. Thread a few beads or buttons onto the end of the pipe cleaner that is inside the flower. Twist or bend the end of the pipe cleaner to hold these objects in place.

Makes 12.

Remove the label from a tall tin can. Smooth off any rough edges around the rim. Paint the outside of the can with a few dots, squiggles or designs, if you wish, or simply leave it plain and shiny.

Arrange the colorful

Donna's Day Creative family fun

by Donna Erickson

tulips in the can for a spring centerpiece the whole family will enjoy. Let them flop in all directions, just like fresh tulips.

Extra tip: Make an extra colorful bouquet in a tin can, attach a card with a greeting and deliver it to someone at a nursing home or hospital. It's easy to transport, and it shows you care.

Note: Small beads may not be appropriate for children 3 and under.

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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Life & Style

Cox calls on friends to help raise funds

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Courteney Cox and David Arquette have a challenge for their famous friends: help raise \$1 million in two weeks for Epidermolysis Bullosa, a rare skin condition that primarily affects children.

Joining Cox and Arquette in the awareness- and money-raising effort are Jennifer Aniston, Orlando Bloom, Kate Beckinsale, Rashida Jones, James Marsden and Eva Longoria Parker. All will lend their famous faces and financial support to the Epidermolysis Bullosa Medical Research Foundation, where Cox, Arquette and Aniston serve on the honorary advisory board. (Brad Pitt, Gwen Stefani and Gavin Rossdale are



also members.)

"EB is very personal to me so I'm happy to be a part of this \$1 million challenge," Cox said in a statement to The Associated Press. "Now is such an important time to put the spotlight on EB and ensure that research can continue at a fast pace."

Epidermolysis Bullosa is a debilitating genetic disorder that causes the skin to blister and break at the slightest touch. Victims are often covered in burn-like sores that never heal and most don't live beyond age 30.

Courteney Cox, left, and husband David Arquette, right, enjoy FOX's Summer Send Off Party, in this July 25, 2006 file photo, in Pasadena, Calif. AP

Writer Clarke to be buried Saturday

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) —Famed science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke will be buried Saturday in his adopted country of Sri Lanka in a secular funeral according to his wishes, a spokesman said Thursday.

"It will be a secular, simple funeral and there will be no speeches," said Clarke's aide Nalaka Gunawardena.

Clarke who died at the age of 90 on Wednesday had left written instructions that no religious rites of any faith should be associated with his funeral.

He will be buried at Colombo's general cemetery in a plot owned by his friend and diving company partner with whom the writer lived for decades, Gunawardena said.

Fred Clarke, his brother, had arrived in the island to participate in the funeral, the aide added.

Oscar-winning actor Paul Scofield dies

LONDON (AP)—Paul Scofield, a commanding stage and screen actor indelibly stamped on filmmakers' minds as the doomed philosopher-statesman Sir Thomas More in "A Man For All Seasons," has died at age 86.

Agent Rosalind Chatto said Thursday that Scofield died in a hospital near his home in southern England. He had been suffering from leukemia and died Wednesday.

Scofield won an Academy Award and international fame for the 1966 film "A Man For All Seasons," in which he played the Tudor statesman and author of "Utopia" executed for treason in 1535 after clashing with King Henry VIII.

Four Seasons tell-all book pulled

NEW YORK (AP)—A gossip book by two ex-concierges at Chicago's luxurious Four Seasons Hotel has been pulled by Three Rivers Press because the authors were legally banned from writing about their experiences.

"Despite previous and repeated inquiries made by Three Rivers Press, we recently learned that Abigail Hart and Nancy

Callahan did not disclose that they had signed confidentiality agreements with their former employer, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts," publicist Katie Wainwright told The Associated Press on Thursday.

The book, "Great Reservations," had been scheduled for a June release. It featured anecdotes on such celebrities as Madonna (who had a "phobialike

aversion" to air conditioning) and Sir Anthony Hopkins (who asked that he simply be called "Tony").

Although advance copies had been sent to the media, the book had not yet been shipped to stores and a print run had not been determined, Wainwright said.

Three Rivers Press is an imprint of Random House, Inc., which is owned by Bertelsmann AG.

Angela Bassett gets Hollywood star

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Angela Bassett has had good days —becoming a mother to twins, winning a Golden Globe, being nominated for an Academy Award. Then there was Thursday.

"Do you ever have one of those days? I woke up and the sun wasn't really shining but then it burst through the clouds and it was glorious. Hallelujah!" Bassett exclaimed to the crowd at the ceremony for the 2,358th star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Bassett, 49, was joined by husband Courtney B. Vance, their children and guests Forest Whitaker, Laurence Fishburne and Rick Fox, her co-star in the new film "Meet the Browns," out Friday.

Fishburne, who starred alongside Bassett in 1993's "What's Love Got to Do With It," highlighted Bassett's resilience in the industry. She landed an Oscar nomination for the role portraying Turner triumphing over abuse.

"You get a lot of no's in this business and you have to have that desire and determination which is what Angela has," Fishburne said.

Whitaker gushed that Bassett was "a powerful artist, a beautiful person, a mother, a wife, a friend who illuminates my life."

Born in New York City and raised in Florida, Bassett snagged bachelor's and master's degrees from Yale before starting her career in theater and then moving on to film.



Actress Angela Bassett smiles during a ceremony honoring her with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame Thursday, March 20, 2008, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles. AP

Her film credits include 1998's "How Stella Got Her Groove Back."

At the ceremony, she recalled moving to Los Angeles from New York in 1988.

"I meant to stay six months but I stayed. Today my cup runneth over!" Bassett said. "I am crying now, I cried yesterday and the day before. ... This day is so, so special to me."

Wife feels invisible when dining out with husband

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: You printed a letter from a woman who told you her pet peeve was that when she and her friends went to restaurants, they were addressed as "you guys" by the servers.

Now let me share my pet peeve: What really frosts me is the way some waiters address only my husband. They greet only him when we arrive, and thank only him when we leave.

Apparently I am invisible! If they don't value my business, why should I give it to them?

—LORRAINE IN FORT COLLINS, COLO.

DEAR LORRAINE: No law says you must. The servers you describe must be using an outdated etiquette book. Their behavior harkens back to the days when males were presumed to be sole providers, expected to pay the tab, and often placed the food order for their companions so the fragile little things wouldn't have to bother speaking to the person taking the order. (In some establishments, women were handed separate menus with no prices listed because the very mention of money was vulgar.)

Because you rightly feel that you have been treated rudely, have a word with the manager of the restaurant and explain that you won't be eating there again because you were not made to feel welcome. Then take your business elsewhere.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: A few years ago I was assisting with a local talent show and received a handwritten note from a parent expressing how much her child enjoyed being in the show and that she appreciated my efforts. It was unexpected and brightened my day.

I decided I would try to find someone to thank whenever possible, and have since mailed many little notes. I wrote to thank my daughter's bus driver for being kind, prompt and safe all year. I contacted a store manager to compliment him on a cashier who was exceptionally helpful and cheerful.

I hear so many people complain, sometimes misdirecting their anger at whoever is in their path. Impatient drivers sound their horns relentlessly. Neighbors threaten to sue each other. Enough, already! The power of a thank-you note goes beyond good manners. It's a great pick-me-up to receive a little thank-you now and then.

—GRATEFUL NOTE WRITER, BRECKSVILLE, OHIO

DEAR GRATEFUL: Thank you for writing. It's interesting that what started you penning thank-you notes was receiving one. Most people cultivate this social skill because they were taught to do so by a parent.

Thank-you notes do not need to be long or fancy, and should reflect one's spontaneous reaction for someone making an effort on your behalf—giving exceptional service, entertaining you or treating you to a meal, or upon receipt of a gift. It can be simple: "The dinner was delightful, the company even more so. Thank you for including me." Or: "The gift is beautiful. Every time I look at it, I'm reminded of your thoughtfulness and generosity. Thank you!" A sentence or two can be more eloquent than a paragraph.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My friend "Patti" always brags to me about how many guys try to talk to her. When she tells me, sometimes I change the subject and act as if I don't hear her—mainly because I'm not in a relationship right now, and I can't possibly be happy for her when things are so bad for me. Am I being a bad friend?

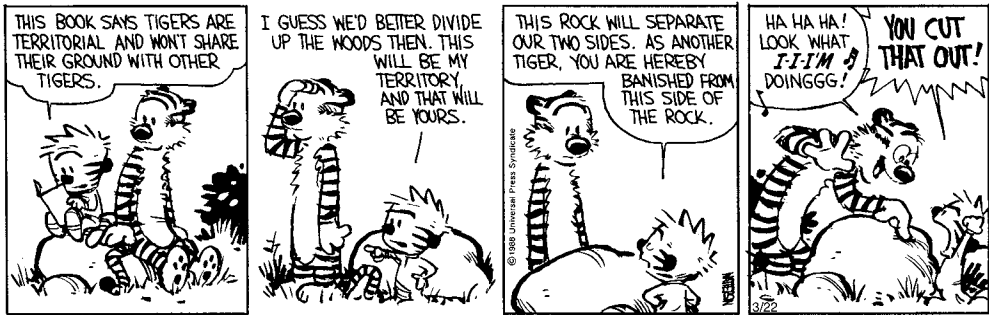
—FEELING GUILTY IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR FEELING GUILTY: Because you're not getting the kind of attention you crave at the moment shouldn't mean you're not happy for Patti. But for her to gloat about her embarrassment of riches while you're starving for attention is immature and not very nice, either. From where I sit, neither one of you is being a particularly supportive friend to the other.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



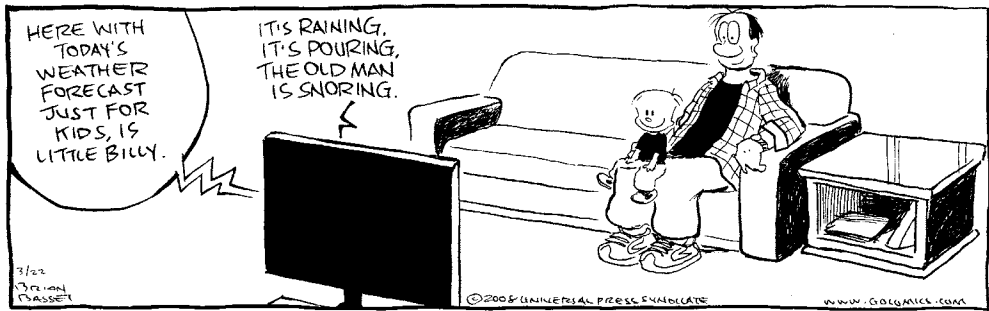
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Snake eyes

4 Walters show, with "The"

8 Engrossed

12 Storage box

13 Icelandic stories

14 Open a bit

15 The air up there

16 Require

17 Show guts

18 Cartoon mouse duo

21 Aviv

22 Grass skirt accessory

23 Pursuing

26 Barbara — Geddes

27 One of the gang

30 Gloomy

31 No gentleman

32 Barn roof adornment

DOWN

1 Recipe meas.

2 Web-page editing software

3 Cameo stone

4 Facade

5 Unimprovable

6 Paradise

7 Walked like a duck

8 Spokes

9 Trojan War hero

10 — — —

11 Squirrels' hangout

12 Couple, in a gossip column

13 Benicio — Toro

14 Ripen

15 To's

16 Opposite

17 Stannum

18 Ovine remark

19 — de deux

20 Pismire

21 Zodiac sign

22 Went kerflooey, as a PC

23 Rather

24 Spelldown

25 Copper film

26 Flight component

27 Former citizen, for short

28 Derriere

29 Medley

30 Loosen

31 Davenport's setting

32 Unaltered

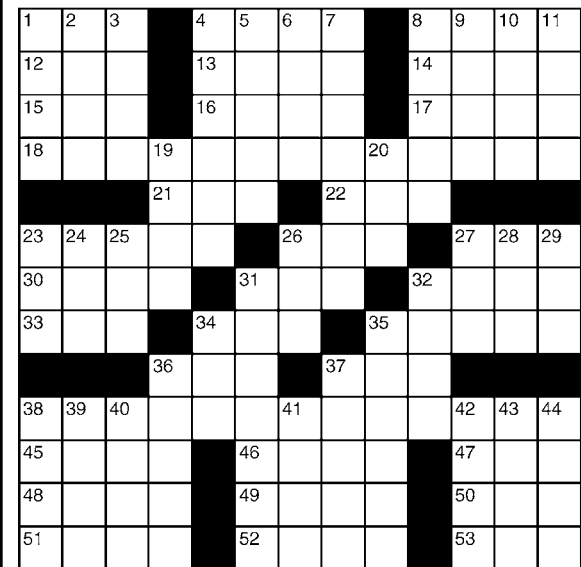
33 Unyielding

34 Opening day?

Solution time: 27 mins.

A	S	S	W	A	G	E	L	A	T	E
M	E	T	A	G	E	V	I	P	E	R
A	P	E	R	O	C	H	E	S	T	E
S	I	T	Y	U	K	O	N			
S	A	S	H	T	O	O	P	I	N	E
			I	I	I	F	E	S	T	E
P	L	U	N	K		T	A	S	T	E
J	E	S	T	E	R	P	A	L		
S	E	A	S	A	L	I	M	I	T	E
			S	T	A	G	E	D	A	N
P	O	L	Y	E	S	T	E	R	E	N
O	N	I	O	N		T	O	N	A	G
D	E	B	U	T	E	N	E	L	O	W

Yesterday's answer 3-22



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Reese Witherspoon, 32; Elvis Stojko, 36; Matthew Modine, 49; Lena Olin, 53

Happy Birthday: Expect to have to deal with personal matters you have left undone. An emotional issue dealing with belongings, finances and legal matters will be upsetting but, once you resolve it, your life will move along with new adventures and possibilities. It's the letting go that will be difficult initially but you can look forward with optimism. Your numbers are 11, 18, 23, 25, 38, 46

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't blow up over matters that concern one of your peers or relatives. Remain calm and the issues that surface will help you make a decision beneficial to the future. Keep your personal life a secret until the dust settles. ★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): A favor you did for someone else will be repaid. You can make some important personal changes by implementing a new set of lifestyle rules. You can ease your stress by doing what's best for you instead of everyone else. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't hold back when you have so much to offer. Your creative ability will be impressive. This may not be the best day for love or personal gains but, when it comes to networking or creative endeavors, you will shine. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Move in the direction that suits you best and don't look back. Don't let anyone use emotional blackmail to get you off track. There is lots

to gain if you use your imagination to solve any dilemma you face. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Plan your next vacation or take a day trip. You are overdue for a short jaunt that will take your mind off your worries. Whatever you decide, make plans to do something special with someone who means a lot to you. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You are overdue to have some fun, so socialize with people who have something to offer. The conversations you have will open up all sorts of professional and personal possibilities. If anyone asks you for a cash donation, say no. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Be upfront about who you are and what you have. Don't give a false impression. A different type of entertainment than what you are used to will encourage you to join in and test the waters. ★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't go over your set budget or try to get too fancy. An unexpected expense is likely to cause you some grief. A change at home will turn out to be a saving grace. Love and romance are in the stars. ★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Love may cause you grief if you have neglected to do something or you have not been attentive. You may have a good idea but, if you try to do things on too big a scale, it won't work and you'll be criticized for being frivolous. ★★★★★

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Money is in the stars and will come to you

EUGENIA LAST THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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from an unusual source. Someone will cause you emotional grief if you haven't dealt with personal papers that affect him or her. Get this matter cleared up quickly. ★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Collect or pay off an old debt or clear up unfinished business. Don't let money slip through your fingers. Put whatever extra you have in a safe place. Someone will offer you good advice about a partnership problem. ★★★★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Keep busy and you will avoid an argument with someone with whom you are in a relationship. The more effort you put into your place or an investment that could open up opportunities for you, the better. ★★★

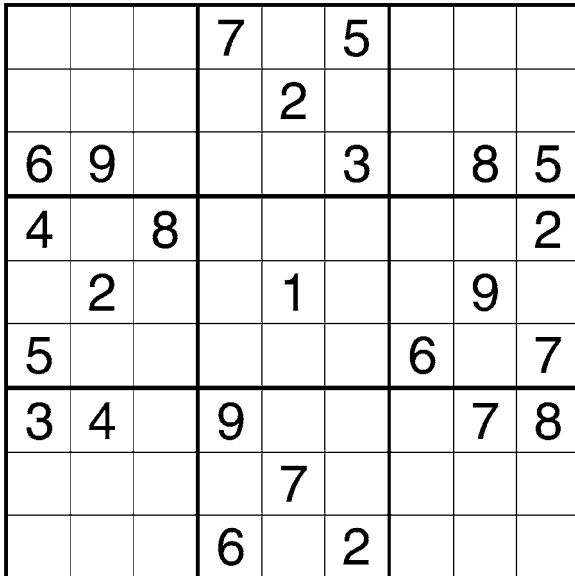
Birthday Baby: You are a good friend and a vehement enemy. You are powerful, willful, calculating and just. You are a leader.

Eugenia's Web sites: astroadvice.com for fun, eugenialast.com for confidential consultations

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



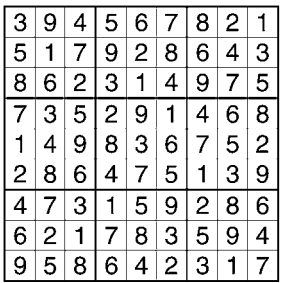
Difficulty Level ★★★★★

3/22

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer



Difficulty Level ★★★★★

3/21

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

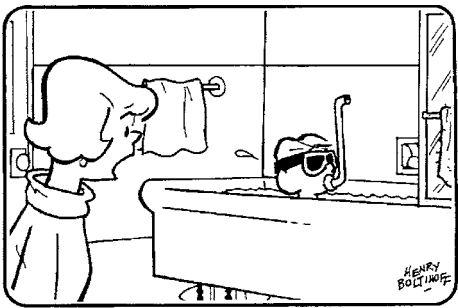
TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

Solution: 8 letters

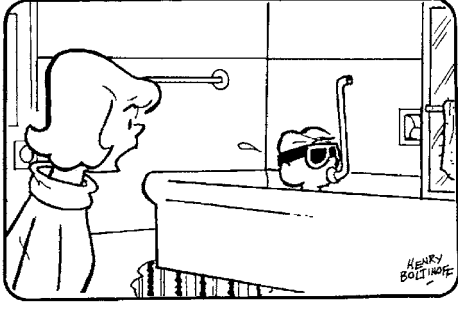


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Approval, Audit, Back, Benefits, Brand, Card, Challenge, Check, Claims, Commercial, Company, Competing, Copy, Deal, Determine, Fact, Fair, Frank, History, Honesty, Laws, Lead, Legit, Lost, Lucid, Marketing, Open, Praise, Principles, Proof, Proper, Push, Read, Respect, Reveal, Sales, Service, Show, Skill, Solid, Status, Taped, Tests, Theory, Trustworthy, Word
Yesterday's Answer: Big Toe
We license to you the right to use the Wonderword logo and the name Wonderword in connection with the sale of puzzles. To order, send check or money order for \$10.95 each plus \$3.25 p&h (\$14.20 total each, U.S. funds only) for the first volume, \$1.50 p&h for each additional volume, to Wonderword, Universal Press Syndicate, 4500 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free 1-800-255-6734 ext. 6688. Order online at upuzzles.com.

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Towel is missing. 2. Mom's hair is longer. 3. Puddle is bigger. 4. Water in tub is not visible. 5. Soap dish is higher. 6. Soap dish is higher.

Wishing Well®

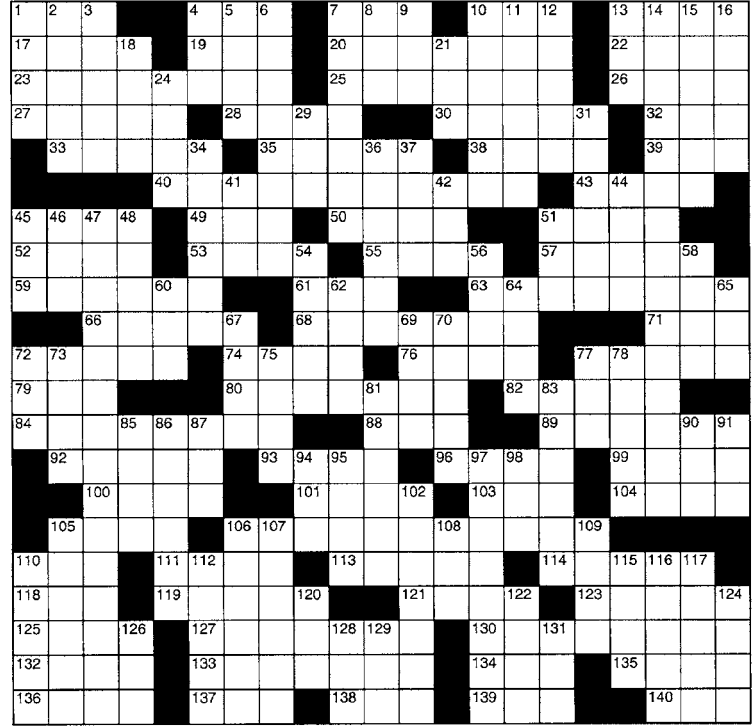
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7	3	2	6	4	7	4	2	5	3	8	7	4
I	R	A	T	G	F	A	L	F	I	O	E	I
3	8	2	4	2	3	2	7	6	8	6	7	5
D	G	U	N	E	E	Q	I	I	W	D	S	R
4	7	2	3	4	5	2	6	4	3	6	2	6
A	A	U	A	P	O	I	Y	P	S	S	E	U
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7	4	2	5	3	5	8	7	3	2	8	7	8
R	L	E	O	I	R	E	T	D	S	A	Y	R

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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Super Crossword WORD PLAY

- ACROSS
- 1 "My country, — of thee..."
- 4 Apply gently
- 7 Theater sign
- 10 Singer Sumac
- 13 West or Faith
- 17 Audiophiles' equipment
- 19 Drop a brick
- 20 Israeli city
- 22 Seedy spot
- 23 —TBALL
- 25 Vanish ingredient
- 26 On a cruise
- 27 Flynn of films
- 28 Port —, Egypt
- 30 Harden
- 32 Jillian of
- 33 Dubuque denizen
- 35 Checker move?
- 38 Famed loch
- 39 Set
- 40 PL—ARIUM
- 43 Tiptoe
- 45 Conserva-tive skirt
- 49 Raven maven?
- 50 Burrowing critter
- 51 Bound bundle
- 52 Gray or Moran
- 53 It'll curl your hair
- 55 Salamander
- 57 Bodybuilder Charles
- 59 Actor Howard
- 61 Scrape by, with "out"
- 63 Investigate
- 66 Baseball's Martinez
- 68 BRAN—
- 71 Debtor's letters
- 72 "— Dawn" (73 song)
- 74 Shrimpton or Stapleton
- 76 Help a nood
- 77 Poet Rossetti
- 79 "Baby — Want You" (71 hit)
- 80 SC—ION
- 82 For — (cheaply)
- 84 Albert's wife
- 88 — Cruces, NM
- 89 Standardize
- 92 Bathrobe fabric
- 93 "La Boheme" seamstress
- 96 Reverberate
- 99 "Orinoco Flow" singer
- 100 "— Dinah" (58 tune)
- 101 Broad bean
- 103 Corn portion
- 104 Read quickly
- 105 "The Three Musketeers" prop
- 106 BOBO—
- 110 HST's successor
- 111 "— patriae"
- 113 Katey of "Married ... with Children"
- 114 Couches
- 118 Above, to Arnold
- 119 Toll
- 121 "Topaz" author
- 123 Proboscises
- 125 — Major
- 127 Word with oil or water
- 130 CARI—URE
- 132 Coalition master
- 133 Morgiana's
- 134 Indian export
- 135 "Rosanna" rockers
- 136 Nomad pad
- 137 Wine word
- 138 Part of MPH
- 139 Sneak a peek
- 140 Apex
- DOWN
- 1 Use the VCR
- 2 Japanese porcelain
- 3 Richard's veep
- 4 Strauss' "— kavalier"
- 5 Son of Zeus
- 6 Rest
- 7 Arena
- 8 — room
- 9 Seville shout
- 10 DeCarlo of "The Munsters"
- 11 Stately dance
- 12 Maintains
- 13 Orthodontists' org.
- 14 ST—WEED
- 15 Main drag
- 16 Intended
- 18 Singer Phoebe
- 21 Consumed a knish
- 24 Defect
- 29 — Jima
- 31 Graceland, for one
- 34 Lad
- 36 The Rolling
- 37 Story
- 41 Sock part
- 42 Modern
- 44 — podrida
- 45 Blanc or Brooks
- 46 Fury
- 47 SU—IC
- 48 Small bay
- 51 — relief
- 54 Olympic award
- 56 Actual
- 58 James Herriot, for one
- 60 Journalist Tarbell
- 62 Spooky Stephen
- 64 Sundance's sweetie
- 65 Color
- 67 California resort
- 69 Mandlikova of tennis
- 70 Stout
- 72 Financial abbr.
- 73 Give off
- 75 Jack of "Rio Lobo"
- 77 "Da — Ron Ron" (63 hit)
- 78 Llama turf
- 81 Actress Hussey
- 83 Disdains
- 85 Family —
- 86 Dental appointment, e.g.
- 87 Bread or booze
- 90 Memo letters
- 91 Tasty tuber
- 94 "No —, and, ..."
- 95 Bulk
- 97 Orchestra members
- 98 "Ball —"
- 102 Bony
- 105 Swimmer Gertrude
- 106 Portable
- 107 Paradoxical
- 108 Predatory fish
- 109 Hawaiian coffee
- 110 Reservation
- 112 Michelle and Cass
- 115 Racing legend
- 116 English course?
- 117 Cold-war assn.
- 120 CSA soldier
- 122 How-to part
- 124 Word in an octagon
- 126 Make believe
- 128 Seance sound
- 129 Lyman or Lincoln
- 131 Bit of sunshine



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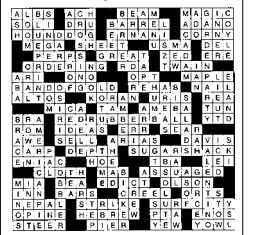
Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

1. U.S. STATES: Which state's capital is Augusta?
2. MUSIC: Who sang the 1980s hit "Rebel Yell"?
3. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What fashion designer introduced the miniskirt?
4. COMICS: What was L'il Abner's last name in the comic strip?
5. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who was the first president for whom women could cast a ballot?
6. GEOGRAPHY: What state lies directly below the Canadian province of Alberta?
7. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What bird is the fastest runner on land?
8. SCIENCE: What was inventor Thomas Edison's middle name?
9. LITERATURE: What was the pen name of William Sydney Porter?
10. LANGUAGE: What kind of game is "draughts" in Great Britain?

- Answers
1. Maine
2. Billy Idol
3. Mary Quant
4. Yokum
5. Warren Harding, in 1920. The 19th amendment giving women the right to vote was ratified earlier that year.
6. Montana
7. Ostrich
8. Alva
9. O. Henry
10. Checkers

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Saturday's Answers



Amber Waves



The Spats



IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR WHEN HIBERNATING BLACK BEARS GIVE BIRTH TO THEIR YOUNG... WHEN BORN, THE CUBS ARE BLIND AND DEAF AND WEIGH LESS THAN A POUND



THE MOTHER BEAR OFTEN SLEEPS SOUNDLY EVEN WHEN GIVING BIRTH TO HER BABIES



MANY BLACK BEARS ARE KILLED JUST FOR THEIR GALLBLADDERS...A SINGLE GALL-BLADDER, WHILE FETCHING THE POACHER ONLY A FEW HUNDRED DOLLARS, WILL SELL FOR THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS ON THE ASIAN OPEN MARKET



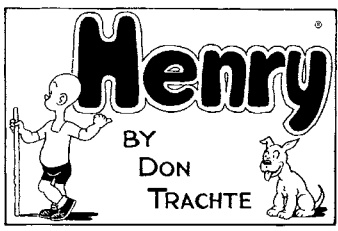
ONE TO FOUR CUBS ARE BORN PER LITTER BETWEEN JANUARY AND MARCH, EACH WEIGHING 8-15 OUNCES



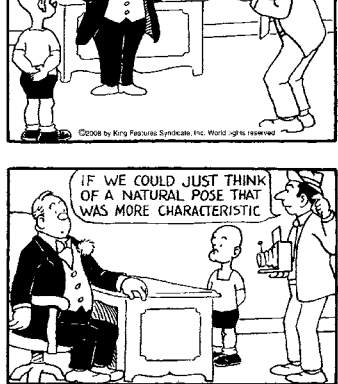
THE BELIEF THAT BEAR PARTS HAVE MAGICAL MEDICINAL POWERS STRETCHES BACK THOUSANDS OF YEARS, AND THEY ARE STILL ONE OF THE HOTTEST ITEMS IN THE SEARCH FOR BETTER HEALTH



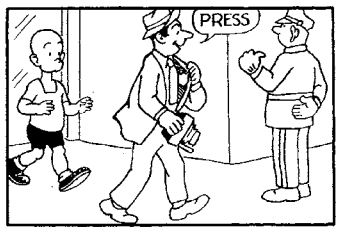
AFTER 6-8 WEEKS THE YOUNGSTERS ARE BIG ENOUGH TO FOLLOW THEIR MOTHER FROM THE DEN TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD



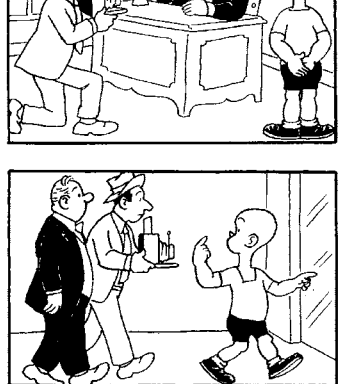
HOLD IT, SENATOR



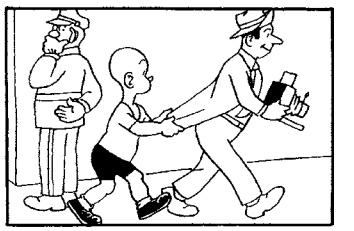
IF WE COULD JUST THINK OF A NATURAL POSE THAT WAS MORE CHARACTERISTIC



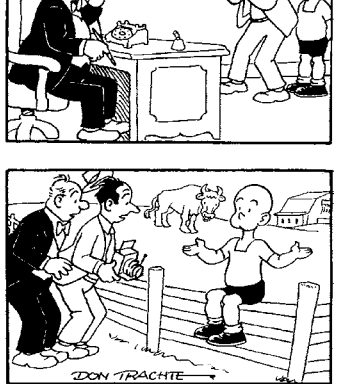
JUST A COUPLE MORE SHOTS, SENATOR



IF WE COULD JUST THINK OF A NATURAL POSE THAT WAS MORE CHARACTERISTIC



JUST A COUPLE MORE SHOTS, SENATOR



IF WE COULD JUST THINK OF A NATURAL POSE THAT WAS MORE CHARACTERISTIC

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cal. Contact: Lucky R. Corporation
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1 ADMIN. ASSISTANT (SM 0046)
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food; workmen's compensation &
medical. Contact: Numbers Int'l Inc.
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1 COOK (SM 0047)
Salary:\$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medi-
cal & workers compensation. Con-
tact: JCC Corp. @234-3078.

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MANAGER (SM 0048)
Salary:\$2,000.00/monthly. Benefits:
Medical coverage expenses; va-
cation leave (earned after 1 yr. of
service); sick leave (earned after
90 days of service); compassionate
leave; employees discount & work-
ers compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific
Hotels, Inc. dba Saipan Grand Hotel
@234-6601.

3 HOUSEKEEPING SUPERVI-
SOR (SM 0049)
Salary:\$5.75/hour. Benefits: Self
arrange housing; medical coverage
expenses; vacation leave (earned
after 1 yr. of service); sick leave
(earned after 90 days of service);
compassionate leave; employees
discount & workers compensation.
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1 ELECTRICIAN (SM 0050)
Salary:\$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self
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expenses; vacation leave (earned
after 1 yr. of service); sick leave
(earned after 90 days of service);
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discount & workers compensation.
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Saipan Grand Hotel @234-6601.

1 FRONT OFFICE SUPERVISOR
(SM 0051)
Salary:\$3.55-\$5.75/hour. Benefits:
Self arrange housing; medical
coverage expenses; vacation leave
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leave (earned after 90 days of
service); compassionate leave;
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1 MANAGER, FRONT OFFICE
(SM 0052)
Salary:\$1,972.00-\$2,200.00/
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1 ACCOUNTANT (SM 0053)
Salary:\$3.55-\$8.65/hour. Benefits:
Self arrange housing; medical
coverage expenses; vacation leave
(earned after 1 yr. of service); sick
leave (earned after 90 days of
service); compassionate leave;
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compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific
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1 ELECTRONIC TECHNICIAN
(SM 0054)
Salary:\$3.55-\$3.75/hour. Benefits:
\$30.00/monthly housing deduc-
tion; medical coverage expenses;
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of service); sick leave (earned after
90 days of service); compassionate
leave; employees discount &

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1 GARDENER (SM 0055)
Salary:\$3.55/hour. Benefits: \$30.00/
monthly housing deduction; medi-
cal coverage expenses; vacation
leave (earned after 1 yr. of service);
sick leave (earned after 90 days
of service); compassionate leave;
employees discount & workers
compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific
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1 ORDER CLERK (HOUSEKEEP-
ING) (SM 0056)
Salary:\$3.55-\$5.75/hour. Benefits:
Self arrange housing; medical
coverage expenses; vacation leave
(earned after 1 yr. of service); sick
leave (earned after 90 days of
service); compassionate leave;
employees discount & workers
compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific
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1 RESERVATION AGENT
(SUPERVISOR) (SM 0057)
Salary:\$3.55-\$5.75/hour. Benefits:
Self arrange housing; medical
coverage expenses; vacation leave
(earned after 1 yr. of service); sick
leave (earned after 90 days of
service); compassionate leave;
employees discount & workers
compensation. Contact: Asia Pacific
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(THS 0047)
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provided housing; self provided
food; workers compensation &
medical payments provided. Con-
tact: Joven A. Mallari dba J.A.M.
Construction Co., @287-5916.

1 ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING
(THS 0048)
Salary:\$4.00/hour. Benefits: Em-
ployers provided workers com-
pensation & medical expenses.
Contact: Servino & Associates Inc.
dba Advanced Engineering Consult
Co., @235-5073.

1 INTERNAL AUDITOR
(THS 0049)
Salary:\$900.00-\$2,000.00/monthly.
Benefits: Workmen's compensation
& medical provided. Contact: Dy-
namic Core Group, Inc. dba Shirley's
Coffee Shop @235-5379/80.

6 COOK (THS 0050)
Salary:\$3.55-\$3.75/hour. Ben-
efits: Workmen's compensation &
medical provided. Contact: Dynamic
Core Group, Inc. dba Shirley's Caf-
fee Shop @235-5379/80.

1 SCUBA DIVING INSTRUCTOR
(THS 0051)
Salary:\$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medi-
cal expense & workers compensa-
tion employer provided. Contact:
Luana Inc. @233-2434.

1 COOK (THS 0052)
Salary:\$3.05-\$3.55/hour. Benefits:
Workers compensation & medical
expenses company provided. Con-
tact: Grotto Inc. @287-3303.

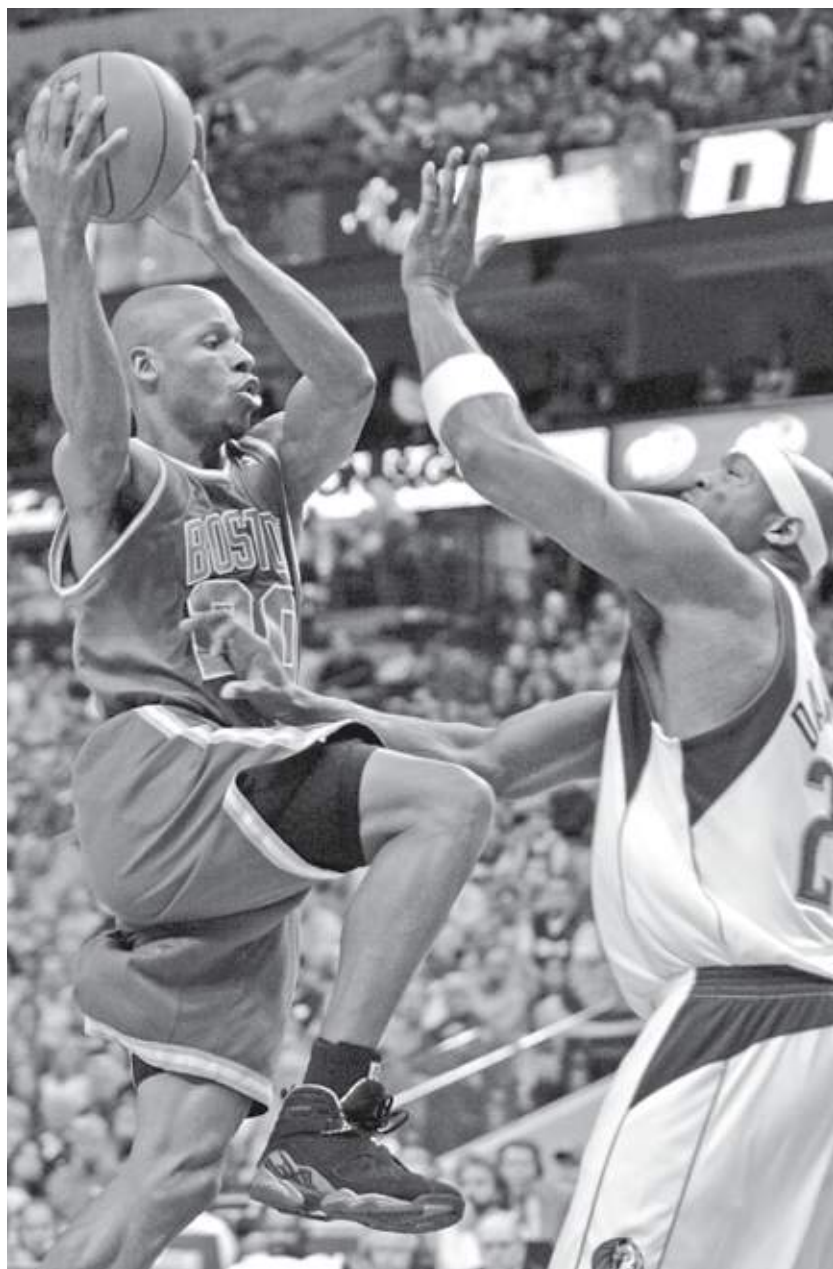
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Allen's return lifts Celtics over Mavs



DALLAS (AP)—Ray Allen returned from a three-game injury absence and a long time on the bench in the fourth quarter to nail a go-ahead 3-pointer with 31.7 seconds left, lifting the Boston Celtics past the Dallas Mavericks 94-90 Thursday night.

The Celtics completed an impressive sweep in the Lone Star State, becoming the first team to go 3-0 in San Antonio, Houston and Dallas since the Sacramento Kings in November 2001. Boston gave the Spurs their first home loss in six weeks, ended Houston's 22-game winning streak, then gave the Mavericks just their sixth home loss.

Allen, recovering from a jammed left ankle, scored 21 points in 31 minutes. His clutch jumper came on his only shot of the final period. He spent the first 10:06 on the bench, then went back in after Dallas had just gone ahead 88-87.

Paul Pierce had 22 points and a season-high 13 rebounds and Kevin Garnett added 20 and 13. Boston upped its NBA-best record to 55-13

Boston Celtics guard Ray Allen (20) goes up for a shot against Dallas Mavericks center Erick Dampier (25) in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Dallas, Thursday, March 20, 2008.

AP

while winning for the 14th time in 15 games. This was the Celtics' first win in Dallas since 2000, ending a seven-game skid.

Dirk Nowitzki had 22 points and 19 rebounds, and Jason Kidd had nine assists, 11 rebounds and two points, but Dallas fell to 0-7 against teams with winning records since Kidd arrived.

Josh Howard added 24 points and Jerry Stackhouse had 17 for Dallas, which led for most of the second half but couldn't pull it out at the end.

Neither team led by more than seven and the intensity escalated. Things got snippy in the fourth quarter, especially between Nowitzki and Garnett, although nothing ever escalated beyond tough play.

The Mavericks went up 75-68 early in the fourth, but the Celtics wiped that out with a 16-5 burst. Nowitzki put Dallas back in front with a pair of free throws after Boston center Kendrick Perkins' sixth foul with 1:54 left, then both teams struggled to score until Allen swished his jumper from the left side. He finished 7-of-17, but only 3-of-9 behind the arc.

The first half was filled with spurts, from Dallas closing the first quarter on a 12-2 run to Boston opening the second on a 14-4 roll. The Mavericks enjoyed the final push, a 13-5 streak featuring a go-ahead three-point play by Nowitzki and a mad-dash layup

by Kidd that sent them into the locker room ahead 48-46.

Spurs 102, Bulls 80

At Chicago, Tony Parker scored 23 points and Tim Duncan had 22 to go with 10 rebounds as San Antonio downed Chicago to end a four-game losing streak.

The defending NBA champs avoided their first five-game losing streak since the 1996-97 season—the one before Duncan's rookie year. And they had such an easy time of it that Duncan and Parker were able to rest in the fourth quarter.

Luol Deng led the sagging Bulls with 18 points and Drew Gooden added 16 as Chicago fell 14 games under .500.

Lakers 106, Jazz 95

At Salt Lake, City, Kobe Bryant scored 27 points, Lamar Odom had 21 points and 12 rebounds, and Los Angeles ended Utah's 19-game home winning streak.

Derek Fisher added 11 points and Vladimir Radmanovic scored 13 for the Lakers, who are the first team to win in Utah in 2008. Los Angeles missed just once in its first 10 shots and was ahead by 24 early in the second period.

Carlos Boozer had 23 points and 15 rebounds and Deron Williams had 26 points and 12 assists for Utah. Andrei Kirilenko scored 15 points, Ronnie Brewer had 12 and Mehmet Okur 10.

Isiah: Knicks playing for the future

GREENBURGH, N.Y. (AP)—If Isiah Thomas' job is in jeopardy, he won't try to save it with meaningless wins down the stretch.

Thomas made it clear Thursday he's playing for the future—whether he's a part of it or not—by revealing the Knicks probably will not use Zach Randolph the next two games.

With starters Stephon Marbury and Eddy Curry already sidelined after surgery and Quentin Richardson questionable, the Knicks could be missing nearly their entire starting lineup when they host the Memphis Grizzlies on Friday night.

Fine with Thomas, who wants longer looks at players such as Randolph Morris and Wilson Chandler.

"This time of year, I think with the roster that we have, we need to take a look at the young players that we have," Thomas said, "particularly some that we have to make decisions on if we're going to keep contractually."

Yes, he said "we."

For the second straight day, Thomas spent most of his session with the media answering questions about the Knicks' potential interest in Indiana Pacers CEO Donnie Walsh for his job as team president. But Thomas said he knew what his future holds, and didn't sound like a man on his way out.

"I plan on being here," he said. "I'm here today, you'll see me tomorrow, and I'll be there the next day."

Beyond that remains a mystery. He wouldn't say if his belief came from a conversation with Madison Square Garden chairman James Dolan, who

hasn't spoken to the media in more than a year. The Knicks and Walsh have not commented on any discussions.

Thomas also said he hadn't heard from Walsh, who hired him as Indiana's coach in 2000. But Thomas added they have a good relationship and that there was "no need to."

Whoever is in charge has a good chance to be picking early in the draft.

The Knicks (19-48) have the fifth-worst record in the league, and their games this weekend are against teams just behind them in the standings: Memphis (16-51) and Minnesota (17-50). The worse the Knicks finish, their better chance of winning the lottery.

A loss Friday drops New York 30 games below .500 and matches last season's total, but guard Jamal Crawford said the record wasn't as bad as it looked because, "now we're just playing young guys and now I'm not sure exactly how we're trying to finish up."

New York didn't give the appearance of a team trying to win Monday, playing its starters a combined 19 minutes in the fourth quarter of a 110-98 loss at Indiana. The Knicks trailed by only two at the end of three.

Thomas often seemed oddly reserved on the sidelines of that game, but says the Knicks aren't out to lose.

"We're definitely trying to win, but I do understand with younger players you're going to make some mistakes and they do get beat by savvy and that's why they need a learning experience now," he said. "But we're definitely trying to win the basketball game."

Bird hoping to remain with Pacers

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Indiana Pacers president Larry Bird wants to stick around for the team's expected offseason overhaul.

He's just not sure whether he'll be orchestrating it.

The NBA Hall of Famer said Wednesday he won't know his plans until he meets with team owners Melvin and Herb Simon.

"I want to wait to talk to the owners and see what they want," Bird said after the Pacers' shootaround. "I will say that I'd like to be here because I enjoy this."

The past few seasons, however, haven't been much fun.

Bird acknowledged he didn't want to trade Ron Artest to Sacramento and Stephen Jackson to Golden State, moves made after those two players ran into trouble.

Artest was a primary participant in the infamous brawl with Detroit Pistons fans in 2004-05, and Jackson had a troubled tenure with the team that included pleading guilty to criminal reck-

lessness for firing gunshots in the air during an Indianapolis strip-club fight.

Ridding the team of the pair didn't make the Pacers' off-court problems vanish.

This season, Pacers guard Jamaal Tinsley and several companions were targeted in a shooting that wounded the team's equipment manager outside a downtown hotel. Police said someone shot an assault rifle at the group after a confrontation at a nightclub miles away.

On Monday, Tinsley and Marquis Daniels cut a deal with prosecutors to avoid trial on charges in a February 2007 fight at an Indianapolis nightclub.

That agreement was the latest in a series of legal problems and incidents involving Pacers, including the recent arrest of a murder suspect after he had been at the home of forward Shawne Williams and a reported rape at Daniels' home. Neither player was charged.

Still, it has tarnished the Pacers' reputation and hurt attendance.

"That's the most discouraging thing,

the incidents the players have been in," Bird said. "There's really a disconnect between the fans and the team. We have had a fan base that was very loyal, and now that's dwindled some."

Pacers CEO Donnie Walsh reportedly has been talking with the New York Knicks about taking over as president. Walsh did not take questions Wednesday, and Bird did not elaborate on the reports, although he said he has seen them.

"While there's been speculation he's been talking to other teams, I have too much respect for him to talk about that," Bird said. "I hope he stays."

The Simons have promised changes. But the team could risk a public relations disaster if it fired Bird, a revered figure in his home state.

Bird shrugged off such a suggestion, reiterating he wants to help turn things around.

"That's very important to me," he said. "It's easy when you're winning 55 or 60 games and going to the conference finals every year."

NBA BRIEFS

Bulls' Hinrich out with ankle sprain

CHICAGO (AP)—Chicago Bulls guard Kirk Hinrich sat out Thursday night's game against the San Antonio Spurs with a sprained right ankle. Hinrich initially hurt his ankle in Tuesday night's win over New Jersey when he stepped on teammate Larry Hughes' foot. He tried to warm up Thursday night but said his mobility was limited. "It kind of swelled up on me the last couple of days and I wasn't moving really well on it," Hinrich said. "I feel like I could go, but I don't think I can move, don't think I'd be very ef-

fective. Any kind of planting or moving is really bothering me." Ben Gordon moved into the starting lineup to replace Hinrich.

Gelabale out for season with ACL tear

SEATTLE (AP)—The Seattle SuperSonics have lost reserve swingman Mickael Gelabale for the remainder of the season due to a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee. Gelabale was injured in practice on Tuesday. He underwent an MRI on Wednesday and team physicians confirmed the in-

jury Thursday morning. He will require surgery. Gelabale played in 39 games this season, also briefly playing with Idaho in the NBA Development League. Gelabale averaged 4.3 points and 1.5 rebounds in about 12 minutes per game for the Sonics, and had played better since being recalled from Idaho. He had a four game stretch last month scoring in double figures, including a career-high 21 points against the Lakers. Gelabale, in his second full season in the NBA, is the second player Seattle has lost this season to knee surgery, joining oft-injured center Robert Swift.

Duke escapes, edges Belmont 71-70



WASHINGTON (AP)—There it was, plain as could be on the overhead scoreboard, orange numbering on a black background: As the closing seconds ticked away Thursday night, Belmont was beating Duke.

Read that again, slowly: No. 15-seeded Belmont was beating No. 2 Duke. Belmont, the Atlantic Sun Conference school with zero NCAA tournament wins to its credit, was leading Duke, the Atlantic Coast Conference school with three national championships on its resume.

And yet it was not to be.

Using every last one of Gerald Henderson's 21 points, including the go-ahead basket with 11.9 seconds left, and one key steal by DeMarcus Nelson, Duke barely avoided what would have been a monumental upset, edging Belmont 71-70 in the first round of the West Regional.

"The last two or three minutes, I was sitting there thinking, 'We're really in this game.' We were so close to winning," Belmont's Henry Harris said. "There's a bit of amazement in your brain, just sitting there: 'Wow!'"

Teeny, tiny Belmont was long past wondering whether one of the biggest upsets in college basketball history was possible. Turns out, so was mighty, mighty Duke.

Yes, it occurred to the Blue Devils, too, that the seemingly impossible might somehow suddenly be possible.

"We wouldn't be human if it didn't," Duke guard Jon Scheyer said. "We knew the situation. There was so much pressure on us. Pressure to

win. Ninety percent of the building wanted us to lose."

Instead, Duke (28-5) snapped a two-game tournament losing streak and advanced to face Arizona or West Virginia on Saturday.

It was much tougher than anyone could have expected beforehand, considering the pedigrees of the participants and this little tidbit: Only four times has a No. 15 defeated a No. 2 in the tournament.

But Belmont used a mix of backdoor cuts and headiness down the stretch to keep things close.

"Watching them on tape, they looked really good," said Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski, who extended his record to 69 career tournament victories. "Watching them in person, they're even better."

And so the Bruins (25-9) stayed in the game, repeatedly clawing back from deficits as large as 10 points.

Duke led 42-35 at halftime, an edge built at the foul line, where the Blue Devils were 11-for-15, and the Bruins were 2-for-4. Otherwise, in nearly every regard, Belmont played Duke even for those first 20 minutes. The field-goal stats were exactly the same: 14-for-29.

Duke pulled ahead 51-41 in the second half, but Belmont came back with a 9-0 run. Duke padded the margin again, but Belmont responded with an 8-0 spurt. Duke led 69-65 with 2:40 left, but Andy Wicke made a 3-pointer to cut it to one.

And after a Duke miss, Justin Hare grabbed the rebound, was fouled, and made both free throws to give Belmont the lead—the lead!—with 2:02 left



Duke guard Gerald Henderson shoots past Belmont's Matthew Dotson (30) and Justin Hare (24) and scores giving Duke a 71-70 victory in a first round NCAA West Regional basketball game, Thursday March 20, 2008 in Washington.

in the game. It was 70-69, Belmont, right there for everyone to see, and the crowd was roaring.

"That was really the most exhilarating feeling that I've ever had coaching. That's when I thought

we were going to go all the way," said Belmont coach Rick Byrd, whose team was routed by UCLA

and Georgetown in its other NCAA appearances. "At first, you hope to be competitive. Then you hope, 'Don't beat us by 20.' And that never really happened. It became like a regular-season Atlantic Sun game, really."

Alas, on this night, on the verge of beating one of the sport's most storied programs, Belmont would not score again.

It would be Henderson's driving basket with 11.9 seconds left that erased Belmont's final lead.

Then, with Belmont inbound-ing the ball under its own basket, Alex Renfro tried to throw a lob pass that was intercepted by ACC defensive player of the year Nelson. He missed at the line, Belmont got the rebound, and had one final chance to make history. The Bruins got the ball in safely this time, with 2.2 seconds left, and their leading scorer, Hare, got a good look at the basket from about 35 feet away.

"It felt good," Hare said later.

But the shot was a tad long. The ball bounced off the iron. Hare winced.

Duke, meanwhile, celebrated as though it had won far more than an opening-round game—something it actually failed to do a year ago, upset by Virginia Commonwealth.

Throughout Thursday, the teams' body language was telling at timeouts.

Belmont's players would be trailing, yet they skipped to the sideline and were met with high-fives, pats on the back and yells of encouragement. Duke's players, in the lead but hardly thrilled, trudged over slowly, some looking at the floor.

"We knew that on this night," Wicke said, "we could play with Duke."

Tiger Woods trails by 2 at Doral



DORAL, Fla. (AP)—Tiger Woods kept his head down as the

rain fell harder and never broke stride as he followed a series of winding stairs and back doors, each step taking him farther from the Blue Monster. A security guard politely asked for an autograph, and Woods reached for a pen and forced a smile.

A tough day at the office.

He shot 67 and was two shots off the lead Thursday at the CA Championship.

Woods hasn't lost a tournament since September, a streak that includes six official victories around the world, the last title coming four days ago with a 25-foot birdie putt on the final hole at Bay Hill.

Apparently, he's working on another streak—the endless pursuit of perfection.

Woods was poised to catch Geoff Ogilvy and Miguel Angel Jimenez, each of whom

opened at 7-under 65, until he missed a 7-foot birdie putt on the 16th and three-putted the 18th hole from 70 feet, missing the last one from 5 feet.

Someone asked if the three-putt bothered him.

"Yeah, I'm (ticked)," Woods said with a cold glare. "You three-putt 18, you're not going to be happy."

Strange, because it was Ogilvy who referred to the Blue Monster at Doral as a "happy place," for Woods, and that's ordinarily the case. He has won here the last two years, and won this World Golf Championship six times in eight years.

For most, it was a shift in the wind that brought joy.

After practice rounds in ferocious wind, so severe that Ogilvy didn't even bother playing on Wednesday, it made a slow shift to favorable conditions, allowing for all but two dozen players in the 79-man field to break par.

Ogilvy got off to a strong

start in one respect. He's ahead of Woods.

The former U.S. Open champion is savvy enough to know that golf is about beating the course better than anyone else, but these times call for slight adjustments. Woods has become the most dominant player this side of World War II.

"You know starting the week if you want to win the tournament, you're going to have to beat him because you know he's going to be in contention come the last nine holes here on Sunday," Ogilvy said. "It's just one of his happy places, obviously. If I can just be one in front after every round, that will be pretty good."

One shot out of the lead was Stewart Cink, who has played in the final group at three tournaments this year and is playing more consistently than anyone but Woods.

Woods wasn't all that bad, he just sounded that way.

"I didn't really do anything

all that special today," Woods said. "I just kind of hung in there and took care of the par 5s, and made a couple of other birdies here and there. But all in all, just kind of ground it out."

If it wasn't anything spectacular and he still was only two shots bad, that would seem to bode ominously for the rest of the 78 players gathered at Doral for this World Golf Championship.

But there was a sense after one day that no one was going to lay down.

Phil Mickelson rallied from a double bogey in the water with four birdies over his final six holes to match Woods at 67, and they were joined by Adam Scott, who is No. 5 in the world and won the Qatar Masters earlier this year with a 61 on the last day.

Four days after slamming his cap to the ground to celebrate a 25-foot birdie putt to win at Bay Hill, he rarely broke a smile. Woods started strongly, with an easy two-putt birdie on the par-5 opening hole and a 20-foot birdie down the fast green at No. 3. He made birdie on two other par 5s, one by

missing an eagle putt from 20 feet, the other with a wedge inside a foot.

His longest putt was a mere 18 feet on the par-3 15th, and Woods had a chance to join the leaders when he blasted a tee shot into the front bunker on the 366-yard 16th hole, only to miss from 7 feet.

"I've got to trust what I see," Woods said, referring to the grain in these Bermuda greens. "I didn't do that enough times today."

Ogilvy felt much better as he continues a slow rise back to form. He has not won since his U.S. Open victory at Winged Foot in 2006, and he took a month off around the holidays when his second child was born.

But he played in the final group at Innisbrook two weeks ago, closed with a 66 at Bay Hill to leave on a positive note, then kept the ball in the short grass for most of a cloudy day in south Florida to tie Jimenez, a Spaniard making his debut at Doral.

"It's definitely been building," Ogilvy said. "I came here

feeling better than I did going to Bay Hill, and I went to Bay Hill feeling better than I did when I went to Tampa."

He was back in his room after Bay Hill in time watch Woods birdie the last hole from 25 feet for the win.

"It's never surprising when he holes it, but it's always impressive," Ogilvy said. "We're all impressed. Hopefully, none of us are scared. I just want to win tournaments, and he's very impressive. But I don't go to bed thinking about it."

Cink, meanwhile, is trying to bury memories of a few close calls. Woods manhandled him in the Accenture Match Play Championship, winning by a record margin (8 and 7) in the final round. Two weeks later, Cink had an early four-shot lead in Tampa until a late collapse paved the way for Sean O'Hair.

"The memories linger from that," Cink said. "I gave it away, but I learned from it. It's part of the process. Let me just say that not everybody out here is Tiger Woods, OK? He's making it look easy. And it's not easy."

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
y-Boston	55	13	.809	—
Toronto	35	33	.515	20
Philadelphia	34	34	.500	21
New Jersey	29	39	.426	26
New York	19	48	.284	35 1/2

Southeast Division

x-Orlando	45	25	.643	—
Washington	34	33	.507	9 1/2
Atlanta	29	39	.426	15
Charlotte	24	44	.353	20
Miami	12	55	.179	31 1/2

Central Division

x-Detroit	49	19	.721	—
Cleveland	39	30	.565	10 1/2
Chicago	27	41	.397	22
Indiana	27	41	.397	22
Milwaukee	23	44	.343	25 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

New Orleans	46	21	.687	—
Houston	46	22	.676	1/2
San Antonio	45	23	.662	1 1/2
Dallas	44	25	.638	3
Memphis	16	51	.239	30

Northwest Division

Utah	45	25	.643	—
Denver	40	28	.588	4
Portland	35	33	.515	9
Minnesota	17	50	.254	26 1/2
Seattle	16	52	.235	28

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	47	21	.691	—
Phoenix	46	22	.676	1
Golden State	42	25	.627	4 1/2
Sacramento	31	36	.463	15 1/2
L.A. Clippers	21	46	.313	25 1/2

x-clinched playoff spot

y-clinched division

Yesterday's Games

San Antonio 102, Chicago 80
Boston 94, Dallas 90
L.A. Lakers 106, Utah 95

CA CHAMPIONSHIP SCORES

DORAL, Florida (AP)—Scores from Thursday's first round of the \$8 million (€5.19 million) World Golf Championships CA Championship being played on the 7,266-yard, par 72 (36-36) Blue Course at the Doral Golf Resort & Spa:

Geoff Ogilvy	31-34	65
Miguel A. Jimenez	33-32	65
Stewart Cink	33-33	66
Phil Mickelson	33-34	67
Adam Scott	34-33	67
Anders Hansen	33-34	67
Tiger Woods	34-33	67

Nick O'Hern	35-32	67
Mark Calcavecchia	34-34	68
Martin Kaymer	34-34	68
Toru Taniguchi	33-35	68
Ryuji Imada	33-35	68
Luke Donald	36-32	68
Andres Romero	36-32	68
Ross Fisher	34-34	68
Robert Karlsson	36-32	68
Gregory Havret	32-36	68
Jeev M. Singh	33-35	68
Robert Allenby	32-37	69
Aaron Baddeley	34-35	69
Jim Furyk	35-34	69
Justin Leonard	34-35	69
Soren Kjeldsen	34-35	69
J.B. Holmes	37-32	69
Sergio Garcia	35-34	69
Zach Johnson	34-35	69
Charles Howell III	35-34	69
Justin Rose	33-37	70
K.J. Choi	37-33	70
Woody Austin	36-34	70
Nick Dougherty	34-36	70
Brett Wetterich	34-36	70
Trevor Immelman	34-36	70
Chapchai Nirat	33-37	70
Richard Sterne	38-33	71
Peter Hanson	34-37	71
Camilo Villegas	35-36	71
Tim Clark	36-35	71
Graeme Storm	32-39	71
Scott Verplank	33-38	71
Steve Stricker	35-36	71
Ian Poulter	35-36	71
Retief Goosen	35-36	71
Lee Westwood	36-35	71
Aaron Oberholser	36-36	72
Daniel Chopra	37-35	72
Rory Sabbatini	36-36	72
Niclas Fasth	36-36	72
Henrik Stenson	35-37	72
Hunter Mahan	36-36	72
Boo Weekley	37-35	72
Paul Sheehan	35-37	72
Graeme McDowell	37-35	72
Anton Haig	35-37	72
Paul Casey	34-38	72
Stuart Appleby	36-37	73
Craig Parry	36-37	73
Stephen Ames	37-36	73
Mark Brown	37-36	73
Mike Weir	36-37	73
Vijay Singh	36-37	73
Sean O'Hair	36-37	73
Andrew McLardy	38-36	74
Jonathan Byrd	36-38	74
James Kingston	35-39	74
Ernie Els	37-37	74
S.S.P. Chowrasia	36-38	74
W.C. Liang	37-37	74
Louis Oosthuizen	36-38	74
Brandt Snedeker	36-38	74
Heath Slocum	35-39	74
John Rollins	36-38	74
Richard Green	37-37	74
D.J. Trahan	35-39	74
Collin Montgomerie	35-40	75
Angel Cabrera	38-37	75
Shingo Katayama	38-37	75
Brendan Jones	39-37	76
Soren Hansen	39-38	77

By The Associated Press

Coaches Chot, Jong expect intense, fiery encounter



MANILA, Philippines—

For whatever cause they're playing and whatever rules in effect, the Ateneo Blue Eagles and the La Salle Green Archers will slug it out in fiery fashion.

This is the same prognosis of coaches Chot Reyes and Jong Uichico for the 1st PBA Ateneo-La Salle Showdown set on Easter Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum.

"For sure, the intensity will be there. We all know that every time these two teams play,

for whatever cause, it's always a battle," said Reyes.

"It's going to be like their UAAP days. They will relive their rivalry during their college days. The pride will still be there," said Uichico.

Reyes and Uichico should know what they're saying, themselves having been part of the storied rivalry. Reyes played for Ateneo and Uichico suited up for La Salle in the early 80s.

PBA commissioner Renauld "Sonny" Barrios has said they will be strict, himself expecting

a highly-charged encounter between the archrivals.

Barrios was on the sidelines as part of the organizing group when a fight between Enrico Villanueva and Joseph Yeo erupted during a similar Ateneo-La Salle exhibition game two years ago in the same venue.

Reyes also called the shots for the Eagles then while Uichico bannered the La Salle team in the preliminary match pitting players of the two schools in the 60s, 70s and 80s.

La Salle won this match but

Ateneo took the main game, 88-85, on a three-point shot by Villanueva in the closing seconds.

"That was just an exhibition game but the boys will surely come out playing hard again this time to get even," said Uichico, subbing for coach Yeng Guiao, who held the reins for La Salle in the previous match.

The charity match, presented by Yakult HealthDrink, is set at 4 p.m. and will be televised live on Studio 23. Proceeds of the event will be for the PBA Players' Educational Trust Fund. (www.pba.com.ph)

ATHLETICS

From Page 28

McDonald's has sponsored the CNMI All Schools Track and Field Championships in the past three years, while Shell donated money that NMA used to buy uniforms for its athletes.

Coca-Cola/Powerade, DFS Galleria, and SaipanCell donated prizes for NMA-organized events. Coca-Cola/Powerade also donated refreshments for NMA-sanctioned tournaments.

PIC, meanwhile, donated the electronic timer the NMA has been using in various races, such as the All Schools meet, Saipan marathon, and half marathon.

NMA secretary general Rob-

in Sapong said they are thankful for all the support given to them by the companies despite the bad economy. "In these trying times, it's good to know that there are still companies which are willing to extend a helping hand to our sport association and to our athletes.

"On behalf of the NMA board and the NMI athletes, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors," he added.

Aside from the private sponsors, NMA also recognized during the banquet last year's top athletes.

Named top performers in their respective age groups were Gabrielle Race, Jordan Manglona, Angelo Jones, Ashley

Babauta, Reylynn Sapong, Lia Rangamar, J.R. Concepcion, Nate Mateo, Jacque Wonenberg, Tyrone Omar, Yvonne Bennett, and Mamiko Oshima.

Top athletes received trophies, while nominees in various age groups received certificates of recognition.

The other nominees were Taylor Knecht, Michael Grandinetti Emily Jones, Jordan Butcher, Danny Auther, Kenyon Schultz, Crosby Schultz, Brandon Philips, David Ramon, Michael Mancao, Ryan Baron, Rachel Abraham, Jellian Majors, Madison Schultz, Chiang Duenas, Champ Untalan, Matt Mancao, Jesus Iguel, Dexter Dillay, Noriko Jim, Nick Gross, Mieko Carey, and Maimi Shimizu.

COLLEGE

From Page 28

the second week of March every year. I get all gooey-eyed over the conference tournaments, especially the one-bid leagues where the whole season comes down to a tournament final.

American University getting into the tournament for the first time is what makes the whole thing so wonderfully sappy and exciting.

But this season needs a boost, lest it be crowded by Tiger Woods and the Houston Rockets, which as of this morning are the two best stories in sports by a mile. You couldn't watch Tiger sink that putt on No. 18 at Bay Hill without coming out of your seat. And if you love basketball, and don't have some cultural or political agenda, you can't watch the Rockets, without Yao Ming, and not appreciate the effort and teamwork and high school-like joy they get from playing together.

I hope the college boys can give me a little bit of what the Rockets have demonstrated over the last month—and history suggests they will.

At least we're starting with a tournament field relatively short on controversy. Okay, maybe Virginia Tech could have gone in over Baylor. And if I were an Arizona State Sun Devil and I were left out of the field, only to watch my blood rival, Arizona, get in after beating the Wildcats twice, I'd be a little nuts. Arizona State finished with a better conference record, had quality

wins over Xavier, Stanford and Cal, yet had to be ripped when Arizona received an invite. Of course, the men's selection committee can counter with the fact that Arizona had a much better RPI and strength of schedule.

Still, we can pretty much skip the squabbling and get right to my tournament forecast.

I'm looking for North Carolina to win.

And I'm looking for a ton of upsets early. A ton.

The big-name, big-conference teams beyond the No. 1 seeds, simply aren't good enough to pick favorites when filling out a bracket.

You want early upsets? I can see second-seeded Georgetown going to the Final Four; I also can see the Hoyas losing a second-round match with Davidson, which has won 22 straight games, just like the Rockets. I could see Duke going to the Final Four; I also can see Duke losing a second-round match with West Virginia or the aforementioned Arizona. And when we start dealing with high-profile schools seeded, say, fifth, I can see even more upsets. It's certainly not crazy to pick George Mason to beat Notre Dame, or Temple to beat Michigan State.

Actually, there are players I'm more interested in seeing than teams.

Start with Michael Beasley of Kansas State and then move to Davidson's Stephen Curry. I want to see O.J. Mayo, who has gotten nothing but better late in his freshman season at USC. I want to see this kid, Dionte Christmas of Temple, a 6-foot-5

kid who has scored 37 and 29 points already this month. I want to see Cornell's Ryan Wittman (son of NBA Coach Randy Wittman) and U-Conn.'s 7-3, 265-pound athlete extraordinaire Hasheem Thabeet, who blocked 10 shots in a game against Notre Dame this season and whom I believe is going to be the next big man to have a major impact on the sport. I want to see George Mason's Final Four holdovers, Folarin Campbell and Will Thomas. I want to see all the shooters who play for Drake, which is pretty much everybody in a Drake uniform: Josh Young, Leonard Houston, Jonathan Cox and Adam Emmenecker. I want to see Wink Adams of UNLV—just because his name is Wink.

There are plenty of presumably good first-round games to see them in, too, including Kansas State vs. Southern Cal, Beasley vs. Mayo.

There's Indiana vs. Arkansas in the first round, Notre Dame vs. George Mason, Davidson vs. Gonzaga, Butler vs. South Alabama, Clemson vs. Villanova, Marquette vs. Kentucky. I like Georgia, given the Bulldogs' spirit in winning the SEC tournament, but I like their opponent, Xavier, even more.

I like North Carolina coming out of the East Region. I like Texas over Memphis in the South. I like Xavier over UCLA in the West and Georgetown over Kansas in the Midwest. Mostly, I like March Madness and the NCAA tournament too much to think it can possibly be as pedestrian as the regular season that preceded it.

RGA

From Page 28

the former Oleai Elementary School principal beat Hardwicke and Joji Taguchi after he shot a one-over 73.

Taguchi, a teammate of Wabol in the 2003 Suva South Pacific Games CNMI national golf team, tied RGA president Hardwicke with his two-over 74 but edged the chief Public Defender via scorecard tiebreak to take home first runner-up honors.

Sablan, meanwhile, was without peer in Senior Flight with his 70 net. Former presiding judge Edward Manibusan and Jun Soo Park finished second and third with a 73 and a 75, respectively.

In other flights in last weekend's Mt. Carmel toruney, Yasu Irinaka won A Flight after firing a 78. A shot off Irinaka's pace was Joh Guerrero with his 79, while third place went to Rudy Sablan.

Lady golfer Leina Kim was without peer in the B Flight, as the islands' No. 1 women's golfer shot an 84 to beat Patrick Guerrero (85) and defending champion and House Speaker Arnold Palacios (88).

Frankie Pangelinan held fort in C Flight with his 90, while two Johns—Terlaje and Salas wound up second and third with scores of 90 and 91, respectively. Pangelinan edged Terlaje on a scorecard tiebreak.

Sherlyn Jones ruled the Ladies Flight with her net 70, followed by Terry Attao (71) and Noriko Togawa (74).

In related news, RGA reminded the public that the club has halved its membership dues for 2008 from the long-standing fee of \$50 to only \$25.

This happened after RGA recognized the hard economic times and decided to give its members and future members a break by slashing the cost of becoming part of RGA.

The club hopes that by making membership in RGA a little lighter in the pocket, more weekend warriors will now return to the golf links and renew their membership or apply as new members of the golf club.

For more information about RGA's new membership policies and other competitions held by the club, contact Hardwicke at 483-2926 or Wabol at 233-3673.

TORGESON

From Page 28

Marianas has a lot more climbing than [Tagaman] course does. [Tagaman] is Hell of the Marianas' toned down version. It is not that difficult of a bike ride, which is nice."

Torgeson completed the two-kilometer swim, 60-km bike, and 15-km run Tagaman course in three hours, 15 minutes, and 49 seconds to finish fifth in the open division.

He was 21:24 behind repeat champion Andrew Noble of Australia and 2:06 after South Korea's Seok-Joo Han in the Open division.

"[Noble and Masayuki Matsumaru] are in another league, there are pros and there are guys who are not pros. The two top guys are out ahead," said Torgeson, who added Noble and Matsumaru are more than seven minutes ahead of him in the swim.

"Their bikes and run are stronger than mine. So three-out-of-three means they are just better folks."

Being the top Saipan finisher earned Torgeson a slot in the 28th Kaika Triathlon on July 15 in Japan along with Maimi

Shimizu. He also had the second best Pacific Islands Club Double time with 6:33:00.

The winner in the PIC Double is given to the finisher with the best combined XTERRA and Tagaman times.

Torgeson also earned a berth in the 2008 XTERRA World Championships on Oct. 26 in Makena, Maui, Hawaii, after winning the 7th XTERRA Saipan Championships' 35-39 division on March 8.

"Maui is still a few months away. We are planning to visit the U.S. in September and if we could combine that with the trip to Maui that would be nice to do it. We just need to figure out how to put those two together."

"Both trips are just weeks apart. I have to add my leaves at the hospital to see if I could extend my vacation. It is a once-in-a-lifetime thing. I've got to talk to Mieko [Carey] and Florian [Braig] who have been there.

"I would also see how my fitness is going to be once it nears. I don't want to waste an opportunity to go there and not perform my best. I want to make sure that before I do it I am in good shape to perform. Once I've assessed my fitness level then I would make a decision if I am going or not."



Allen's return lifts Celtics over Mavs

Ray Allen returned from a three-game injury absence and a long time on the bench in the fourth quarter to nail a go-ahead 3-pointer with 31.7 seconds left, lifting the Boston Celtics past the Dallas Mavericks 94-90 Thursday night. **25**

Saipan Tribune Sports

Duke escapes, edges Belmont 71-70

There it was, plain as could be on the overhead scoreboard, orange numbering on a black background: As the closing seconds ticked away Thursday night, Belmont was beating Duke. **26**



28 SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 2008

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Torgeson wants to improve in swimming

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

If there's one area the top local finisher in the 2008 Saipan Sportsfest would like to improve on it's in swimming.

In a recent interview with the *Saipan Tribune*, Eli Torgeson said he looks to improve his swimming so he could offer a better challenge to pros in the 2008 Saipan Sportsfest—8th XTERRA Saipan Championships and 20th Tagaman Triathlon next year.

Torgeson said once he lowers his time in the swim leg, it would be a domino effect since he will have better times in the bike and run portions—resulting in a better overall record.

"Swimming has always been my slowest and weakest sport," said Torgeson, who was 21st out of the water with a time of 37 minutes and seconds in last weekend's Tagaman.

However, he managed to catch up with 15 swimmers that came out ahead of him in the bike leg. "I came out of the water pretty slow. My advantage is it is fun to pass a lot of people on the bike."

He said that his goal for next year is to take five minutes off from his swim time. "The thing that helps you out when you become a good swimmer is your overall time can drop by a number of minutes, which is good."

Torgeson, who will also join XTERRA Guam on March 29, said good swimmers learn how to conserve their energy. "You

come out of the [water] with more energy, less wasted and less tired. Which is a good reason to become a better swimmer."

Torgeson sure has a lot of energy left after finishing last weekend's Tagaman since he was also seen helping the medical team volunteers in attending to the other finishers.

He said that XTERRA Saipan and Tagaman are two great races and he is looking forward to joining more triathlon events. "I wish that we could have a race or two like these at some other time during the year. I will also be joining XTERRA Guam."

Torgeson said XTERRA Guam suits him just fine since it is a shorter course that you can finish in two hours and gives him more time to recover from the two races he did, which were seven days apart.

"XTERRA Guam finishes in two and a half hours giving you more energy after the race. It also works a little better for me giving me more recovery time."

"It is a shorter swim and overall shorter race, which for my level of fitness is perfect. I am hoping [XTERRA Guam] would be a great race for me."

He said he did not find the Tagaman course difficult to negotiate since it is a very similar course with the Inaugural Hell of the Marianas Full-Island Cycling race, which he won in October last year.

"It is similar in the sense that you go over some of the same territory. The Hell of the

See **TORGESON** on Page 27

Eli Torgeson smiles at photographers and volunteers as he passes by the Last Command Post in Marpi in the bike leg of last weekend's 19th Tagaman Triathlon.

JON PEREZ

By MICHAEL WILBON
The Washington Post



College hoops tournament offers so much more, and this year it's needed

Maybe the NCAA men's basketball tournament will save the season.

Maybe a string of first-week-end upsets and buzzer-beaters will divert our attention from what has been a very ordinary season.

We've become trained like seals to applaud at the very mention of Selection Sunday and the sight of a tournament bracket, and legitimately so, because March Madness has delivered more consistently and more dramatically than probably any annual event in American sports.

People love college basketball so much it's become blasphemous to criticize the product as a whole, to suggest the season was just, well, blah. But that's what it was. There aren't many great teams, if any.

There aren't many upperclassmen we're just itching to see. Conferences that often are loaded and deep, like the Big Ten and the SEC, are unimpressive at the top and dreadful beyond the first four or five teams. Even Dick Vitale, college basketball's biggest advocate, used the word "mediocrity" to describe the tournament field when it was announced Sunday evening.

Of course, we remember the college season based on how the NCAA tournament plays out. Not much that happened in the 2005-06 season was as memorable as George Mason's Cinderella run in March. If the tournament's dramatic and full of wonderful games, that's pretty much how we remember the season. And this season needs a bailout.

Don't get me wrong, I turn into a cheerleader

See **COLLEGE** on Page 27

RGA congratulates Mt. Carmel winners

By MARK RABAGO
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Refaluwasch Golf Association the other day congratulated members that made it into the winners' circle of last Saturday's 6th Annual Mount Carmel Golf Tournament held at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort.

In a statement made to the *Saipan*

Tribune, RGA applauded Championship Flight winner Jess Wabol, the division's second runner-up Adam Hardwicke, and Seniors Flight topnotcher Nick Sablan for representing the club well in the annual fundraiser for the islands' only Catholic school.

Wabol, who is tournament director of RGA, successfully defended his Championship Flight title when

See **RGA** on Page 27



Wabol



Sablan



Hardwicke

Athletics group thanks supporters



JON PEREZ

Northern Marianas Athletics Female Athlete of the Year Yvonne Bennett, center, poses with NMA president Kurt Barnes, left, and NMA vice president Lou Wabol in Wednesday night's banquet at the Kilili Beach Pavillion.

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As a show of its gratitude, Northern Marianas Athletics will be handing plaques of appreciation to six companies that supported their projects and events last year.

NMA officials—led by president Kurt Barnes, vice president Lou Wabol, secretary general Robin Sapong, and developmental officer Elias Rangamar—thanked McDonald's, Shell Marianas, SaipanCell Communications, DFS Galleria Saipan, Coca-Cola/Powerade, and the Pacific Islands Club for their support during the NMA Annual Awards Banquet at the Mina-chom Atdao Pavillion last Wednesday.

See **ATHLETICS** on Page 27

